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*Regionalism versus  
Provincialism:  
A study in problems of  
Indian National Unity*

**By Joan V. Bondurant**

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## THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN NATIONAL UNITY

Of the many characteristics which distinguish the contemporary history of India there is perhaps none which dismays the sympathetic observer more than the complex of competing loyalties which bind upon the Indian citizen. When one sits down to write about India he is confronted at once with the necessity of discussing the problems of unity and of separatism--the overriding problem of a country so rich in cultural diversity, so ancient of heritage. The individual, the world over, may characterize himself in many ways, for loyalty and obligation and function are always many-faced. It is when obligations conflict, and functions contradict--when loyalties collide--that social and political problems arise. In India the competition and the struggle are clear and present. But if religious, communal, cultural and linguistic differences threaten the unity of India, they present, as well, a challenge to the political Union. For "unity in diversity" is at once a threat and a promise.

### INDIA AND THE "NATIONALITY QUESTION"

The political observer of contemporary developments in India may yet live to witness years of dissension and disintegration. One suspects, however, that should he look back from some not-too-distant future he could then acknowledge that he had been a witness to that civilizing process by which a State welds its many parts into a great and abiding nation. "A State may in course of time produce a nationality," observed Lord Acton, "but that a nationality should constitute a State is contrary to the nature of modern civilisation."\* Lord Acton argued to deny the classic position of John Stuart Mill that it is "in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities."† Though he lived to modify his early position, Lord Acton's essay on nationality not only proved prophetic for the later history of Europe, but it speaks directly to the contemporary circumstance in South Asia.

\*John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton, Essays on Freedom and Power [Selected, and with an introduction by Gertrude Himmelfarb. Preface by Herman Finer] (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1948), p. 187.

†John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1873), p. 313.

Modern theories of nationality have played a prominent role in the political history of recent times. The fund of literature built round the question is eloquent evidence both of its appeal to political theorists and its significance to national leaders intent upon objectives as different in character as the parts of the world in which they move. Nationality has been defined as "a group of people who speak either the same language or closely related dialects, who cherish common historical traditions, and who constitute or think they constitute a distinct cultural society."\* There is general agreement that a "nationality" may exist without an organized sovereign State of its own and that a State may embrace several nationalities.† The question as to whether a "nation" exists without its realization through a political unity manifest in the machinery of a State goes beyond the matter of definition. Nationalities, as Karl Deutsch observes, "turn into nations when they acquire power to back up their aspirations,"‡ that is, when they become sovereign. The question as to when a nationality becomes a nation may perhaps only be answered in normative terms. Again, the criteria by which a nationality is to be judged are subject to serious debate--not only in objective study but also on the open field where peoples pressing to assert distinction, and striving to acquire power, become embattled. The assertion that "a sense of nationality and a passion of nationalism are different things,"\*\* may readily be granted, but that "the one may be felt, and is likely to be felt, before the other," and that "both may be posterior to the fact of nationality"†† are matters which call for serious reflection.

\*Carlton J. H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 5.

†See, for example, Hayes, op. cit., p. 5; Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nationalism: A Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. xvii; Sir Ernest Barker, National Character and the Factors in its Formation (Rev. ed.; London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1948), p. 240.

‡Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication, An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality (Cambridge, Mass.: The Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1953 [published jointly by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York]), p. 78.

\*\*Barker, op. cit., p. 240.

††Ibid.

In the decades which spread between Lord Acton's time and the culmination of the first world war, the theory of nationality occupied the minds of those who thought and wrote about the abstract State and those who acted to fashion the several polities of Europe. By the 19th century, the successive partitions of Poland had aroused strong sentiment for the claims of a "nation" to the political right of constituting a State, and the achievements of Mazzini in the Italian peninsula had captured the attention of "nationalist" leaders throughout the world. Nationality theory attracted many who labored under subject status; "self-determination" became a watchword for those who sought freedom for subject nations. The modern theory of nationality had, indeed, become "the most powerful auxiliary of revolution," and, in contemporary movements, "its actual substance,"\* as well. It remained to serve those who would use it.

In the period between the two great wars, the nationality theory laid down a trail which cannot but have meaning for those who would observe its equivocal course. For nationality may not aim "either at liberty or prosperity, both of which it sacrifices to the imperative necessity of making the nation the mould and measure of the State."† Theories of nationality have special meaning for a study of the current political history of South Asia. If, in South Asia, the "nationality question" remains to plague, in India the problem of nationality bids fair to civilize. For, in India, where nationalism was both a liberating and a deeply divisive force, it has been tempered by the liberal spirit of tolerance and compromise.§ The chapters which follow treat of a few details in the constellation of factors in India which bear upon the problem of achieving "unity in diversity."

When the Indian subcontinent was partitioned into two independent nation-states, there remained enough separately identifiable groups in both Pakistan and residual India to launch a score of movements, separatist in character, and political in objective. The "two-nation theory," based upon the overriding consideration of religious distinction, won a

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\*Acton, op. cit., p. 172.

†Ibid., p. 194.

§Hans Kohn has characterized nationalism in general as being "a deeply divisive force, if it is not tempered by the liberal spirit of tolerance and compromise or the humanitarian universalism of a non-political religion." (Hans Kohn, Nationalism, Its Meaning and History [Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1955], p. 90.)

victory for the Muslim League in 1947 and formed the substance of a revolution which issued in the creation of the Islamic State of Pakistan. To the extent that one might agree with Lord Acton's judgment that those States are "substantially the most perfect which . . . include various distinct nationalities without oppressing them,"\* the residual India had already suffered a loss through the creation of a separate "Islamic" State. That event was the application of the contrary view that it is "the nation which makes the State, and not the State which makes the nation."† But if the theorists, having moved from Mill to Acton, later--in the inter-war decades--revived the position that "free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities,"§ the current history of South Asia calls for a review of Acton's initial assertions. The nationality theory, Acton reasoned, is a chimera, for the settlement at which it aims is impossible.\*\* Minorities--ethnic, religious, communal, linguistic--persist. India, which, after the partition, retained a Muslim minority of 35 million††--is the third largest Muslim country in the world.

Aside from the Muslim community, other groups, distinguished by cultures, languages, and histories of their own, now tend to assert political rights through reference to such distinctions. Variations on the theme and theory of nationality have become familiar auxiliaries to agitation. It is one of the more logical developments in politics and history--and one of the ironies--that India's foremost statesmen, who in their earlier years as Indian nationalists fought a losing battle against a nationality theory, are engaged once more in a struggle which has as its objective the securing of "unity in diversity." For Indian leaders, having gained independence only to lose the argument over the validity of the two-nation theory must now recognize--and resist--the appeal of separatist claims. Just as religious communalism opened a second front to harass India's statesmen as they struggled for political freedom in the 1940's, so provincialism distracts and troubles contemporary leaders as

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\*Acton, op. cit., p. 193.

†For a favorable analysis of this position, see Barker, op. cit., p. 249.

§Mill, op. cit., p. 310.

\*\*Acton, op. cit., p. 193.

††Government of India, Census Commissioner, "Religion--1951 Census," Census of India, Paper No. 2, 1953, p. 1.



they struggle for economic freedom and the securing of the Union in the 1950's.

The problems of organization and devices of government in a country of great diversity served to attract some Indians to the Soviet nationality theory. The parallels between India and the Russian Empire with regard to diversity in culture and multiplicity in language, as well as problems arising from underdeveloped tracts and backward classes, did not escape Indian leaders. In the inter-war period, Soviet national federalism as a means for organizing a multi-national State appealed to many of those who wished to promote a secular State while at the same time retaining regional differences in language, institutions and custom. Within the Soviet system, national rivalries appeared to have promoted unity, harmony, and order rather than to have stimulated isolation and separatism. Stalin had denounced efforts to ignore national differences as "Great-Russian chauvinism" and had labelled as "deviators" those who "fail to realize that only if the national cultures develop will it be possible to secure the real participation of the backward nationalities in the work of socialist construction."\*

Indian nationalist leaders--attracted as they were, in this early period, to the experiments conducted within the Soviet Union--later came to question the conditions which made possible the seeming order and harmony which marked the transformation of backward areas and the shaping of a multi-national State under the Soviet system. For the most part, they were critical of a discipline of dictatorship, and they were repelled by a monolithic ideology which provided cohesion based upon the ever-present power of a single party supported

\*Stalin made use of the "Marxian dialectic" to justify his insistence upon the development and expansion of "national cultures" during the "period of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.," while relegating the ultimate "fusion into a single common language" to the indefinite future when the proletariat should be victorious throughout the world. The "dying away of national languages and their fusion into a single common language," he asserted, was "not an internal state question . . . but an international question"--a position which he set within the framework of his distinction between "victory of socialism in one country" and "the victory of socialism internationally." (From his report delivered at the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, June 27, 1930. Joseph Stalin: Marxism and the National Question; Selected Writings and Speeches [New York: International Publishers, 1942], pp. 208, 209 and 213.)

by the violent sanctions of the State. The Indian National Congress, in following Gandhi and, later, Nehru, found it difficult to make distinctions which issued in the recognition of rights to self-determination only for the "laboring masses;" nor could the Congress leadership conceive as "socially useful" only those customs and beliefs which could be described as "proletarian."<sup>\*</sup> The Soviet nationality theory had played an important role in the Bolshevik Party's rise to power. It had been used as a means to the end of power, and as a tool of statecraft. Only incidentally did the nationality theory represent a genuine attempt to solve the problem of the minorities. Once the party had secured itself, the objectives became those of centralism and unification.<sup>†</sup> Stalin side-stepped the contradiction by employing the Marxian dialectic whereby ultimate goals ever receded and contradictions could be contained by fashioning a new formula for every period.<sup>§</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup>For a scholarly study up to 1947 of the "complex evolution of the concept of Soviet nationhood," and an analysis of the Soviet theory that "the nationality problem is not independent and self-sufficient but part and parcel of the question of proletarian dictatorship," see Julian Towster, Political Power in the U.S.S.R. 1917-1947; The Theory and Structure of Government in the Soviet State (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>†</sup>For a detailed presentation of this thesis, see the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Eugene Nicholas Hardy, "The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic; the Role of Nationality in its Creation, 1917-1922" (University of California, 1955). Hardy shows that "in the case of conflict between the aims of the Center and nationality considerations, the latter were either overridden or placed in a secondary position."

<sup>§</sup>Following his significant statement "On Marxism in Linguistics" in 1950, Stalin attempted to refute criticism that the new formula contradicted his position on language taken at the Sixteenth Party Congress (1930), by asserting that "Marxism does not recognize immutable conclusions and formulas obligatory for all epochs and periods." The 1930 formula which held that languages would be fused into one general, new language referred to "the epoch after the victory of socialism on a world-wide scale." The 1950 formula, rejecting the earlier [Marr] theory of "hybridization" and asserting that the mixture of, say, two languages would result "not in the formation of a new language but in the triumph of one of these languages and the defeat of the other," concerned "the epoch before the world-wide victory of socialism."

In India, Communist Party leaders alone persisted in an active attempt to use the Soviet nationality theory as a political tool.\* So long as the Communists remain out of power in India, they are left free to refashion nationality theory without becoming involved in the contradictions which beset the Bolshevik leadership in the Soviet Union and which led, through tortured logic, even to a perversion of the dialectic. Inasmuch as Indian Communists are not charged with the responsibilities of consolidation and of unification, they can persist in their support to regional particularism, justifying this support by reference to a theoretical framework. Nationality theory is both good Marxist-Leninist doctrine and good political tactics: the practical and the theoretical here coincided. Where the defining of "nationality" in the specific circumstance has shifted, and where the course of Indian Communist doctrine on the question has been equivocal

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[Emphases in the original] (The Soviet Linguistic Controversy, translated from the Soviet Press by John V. Murra, Robert M. Hankin and Fred Holling, Columbia University Slavic Studies Series [New York: King's Crown Press, 1951], pp. 96-98.)

\*Some non-communists in India, as elsewhere, tended, in the pre-independence days, to accept the "experiment of federalism" in the U.S.S.R. as an interesting effort to deal with minorities. Examples of the manner in which the Soviet system was treated in passing are the following excerpts from pre-independence works by three strongly non-communist Indians:

In Russia there is a graded set of political units. The autonomous republics form the U.S.S.R. by federating together, but within each autonomous republic are also included autonomous regions and autonomous districts.

(D. R. Gadgil, The Federal Problem in India [Poona: Gokhale Institute, 1947], p. 70.)

In the post-War world the U.S.S.R. was the only country that tackled the problem of nationalities successfully. The experiment of Federalism was carried out there. They set up a new continental supranational state on the theory that national self-determination in cultural affairs was compatible with central planning. The Soviet Union composed of 185 peoples speaking 145 languages for a while managed to combine the enjoyment of diverse national cultures and the advantages of collective security and the pooling and planning of resources. But here again the threat of war warped the development . . .

(Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan, The Communal Triangle in India [Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1942], p. 150.)

or vacillating, the overweening consideration has been that of adjusting the party position to agree with that of Moscow's theoreticians. As we shall see, Indian Communists have consistently supported changing forms of regional particularism.

The early support to Pakistan, the Communist struggle for the establishment of a separate Telugu-speaking state (Andhra), the role of the Indian Communists in Kashmir,\* the continuing agitation for the reorganization of states in India on a linguistic basis--each of these efforts has grown out of and has been justified by a theory of nationality. However strong the case may have been in the particular instance, the Communist pattern of participation raises some serious questions. Not the least of these is that which issues from the problem of unity itself. For the problem of the minorities remains, and the key to unity in diversity has yet to be fashioned. It is with this work that the party in power is now engaged.

"A State which is incompetent to satisfy different races condemns itself," wrote Acton, "a State which labours to neutralise, to absorb, or to expel them, destroys its own vitality; a State which does not include them is destitute of the chief basis of self-government."† India is richly endowed with many "nationalities." The test of the Indian Union may indeed lie in the ability of India's leaders to assure the co-existence of these nationalities under the same State;§ the test of democratic institutions and processes may rest upon the manner in which these several "nationalities" are welded into one.

#### ELEMENTS IN THE UNITY QUESTION

When Indians speak of a "national genius" and of "the fundamental oneness of Indian mind," what they "really" mean, K. M. Panikkar tells us, is "the dominance of Sanskrit which overrides the regional differences and linguistic peculiarities and achieves a true national character in our thought

\*See the section on Kashmir and especially pages 18-20 on "The Role of the Communists" in the Indian Press Digests for the period August 1 to October 31, 1953, Vol. II, No. 7 (Berkeley: University of California, 1955).

†Acton, op. cit., p. 193.

§Ibid., p. 185.

and emotions and even gives form and shape to the languages."\* To take as extreme a position as does Sardar Panikkar when he argues further that Sanskrit has been a "permanently unifying factor" throughout the subcontinent "for over two thousand years," is to minimize the centrifugal pull of regional differences. Nevertheless, the Sanskritic culture--the great tradition--stretches from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. Pilgrimage--from the extreme South to the extreme North, from East to West--attests to a common base, as does the vast reservoir of Sanskrit literature which establishes the norms of social behavior, provides the sanction for social institutions, and suggests the forms of group life throughout the whole of India.† But within the Sanskritic, Hindu base lies a rich diversity. Cultural, linguistic, sectarian--even religious--differences are readily accommodated within Hinduism. Over against the communal meaning of Hindu is to be placed the political meaning of Indian. And in the political sense there is a unity in India--or perhaps more precisely, a unification--developed first under British rule, pursued through the nationalist movement, and further established as Indians have achieved experience and success in democratic representative government.

\*K. M. Panikkar, Geographical Factors in Indian History (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1955 [Bhavan's Book University, No. 28, edited by N. Chandrasekhara Aiyar and K. M. Munshi]), p. 92.

†For a discussion of these factors see Radhakumud Mookerji, Nationalism in Hindu Culture (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1921).

The psychological aspect of Indian nationalism which enters into the thesis of a distinctive Indian national character was expressed in the following comments by Jogadendra Nath Roy in his welcoming address to the 17th annual Session of the Congress in Calcutta in 1901:

I know there are men who deny us the right of calling ourselves a nation. According to these superficial observers we can have nothing in common because we talk different dialects, . . . and because the shape of our turbans are striking in their diversity. But these people do not care to ascertain, and prefer to remain in blissful ignorance of the fact that in all these various dialects we express much the same sentiments, the same prejudices, the same ideas and ideals of life--that turbans of various shapes and colours cover heads cast more or less in the same mould which produce and develop similar thoughts.

(The Indian National Congress [Madras: G. A. Natesan (1910)], Part II, p. 9.)

From the British, India inherited many unifying devices: a common legal code, an administrative structure, nationwide communications, all-India political parties, standardized education, and an economic policy which treated India as a national whole.\* Beyond these, Indians developed common cause against the British and pressed their common grievances against an alien rule. In so doing they established a national--and nationalist--movement.

Analysis of the presidential addresses made to the Indian National Congress during the first two decades of the movement which was to culminate in an independence struggle, reveals not only an awareness of the problem of Indian national unity among Indian leaders, but also the foreshadowing of separatist fears--fears later realized in the added dimension of demands made in terms of a nationality theory and the introduction of a communal triangle. The early leadership in the country took India--in contradistinction to the Hindu or Muslim communities--as "the nationality," and the Indian National Congress as "a mighty nationaliser."† Eradication of "all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices," and the development and consolidation of sentiments of national unity were among the major aims and objectives laid down at the first session of the Congress Party.§ These objectives were to be reasserted again and again as the Congress developed into a national organization. In 1891 the theory of nationality as applied to communal groupings, was described as "at once learned and unlearned, ingenious and stupid, etymological and ethnological."

Now a common religion was put forward as the differentia; now a common language; now a proved or provable common extraction; and now the presence of the privileges of commensality and inter-conjugal kinship. These ill-considered and ill-intentioned hypotheses have, one and all fallen to the ground, and no wonder for the evident circumstance was lost sight of . . . In my view the word nationality should be taken to have the same meaning as the Sanskrit Prajah, which is the correlative of the term Rajah--the ruling power.

\*For an excellent statement elaborating these and other factors militating towards and against unity, see W. H. Morris-Jones, Parliament in India (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), Chapter I, especially pp. 3-33.

†From the presidential address of P. Anandacharlu, The Indian National Congress, Part I, p. 100.

§W. C. Bonnerji, in his first presidential address to the Congress in 1885. (Ibid., Part I, p. 3.)

Though, like the term Prajah, it may have various significations, it has but one obvious, unmistakable meaning in political language, viz., the aggregate of those that are . . . 'citizens of one country, subordinate to one power, subject to one supreme Legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe, by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens.'\*

When President Anandacharlu reached the climax of his statement on India as one nation he was roundly cheered. A nation, he said, is like a tree: as its central stock are the people who have "for ages and generations" settled in the country and who have been "more or less unified by being continually subjected to identical environments and to the inevitable process of assimilation." Then, he continued, other peoples are added, "like scions engrafted on the central stem, or like creepers attaching thereto," people who settle in the country to come under the same unifying influences, "though still exhibiting marks of separateness and distinctness." "Affirm this standard," Anandacharlu concluded, "and you have an Indian nation. Deny it and you have a nation nowhere on the face of the earth."†

When Rajendra Lal Mitra, addressing the Congress session in 1886 asserted: "We are all bound by the same political bond, and therefore we constitute one nation;"§ when the great Parsi president of the Congress, Pherozeshah Mehta, described an "immutable bond" as binding the several communities together in the pursuit of common aims and objects under a common Government;"\*\* and when, into the early years of the twentieth century, Congress leaders spoke with confidence upon the justification of their party as the "political conscience"†† of the country, they were speaking to the question

\*From the presidential address of P. Anandacharlu, The Indian National Congress, Part I, pp. 100-101.

†Ibid.

§Ibid., Part II, p. 1.

\*\*Ibid., Part I, p. 70.

††See, for example, the presidential addresses of N. G. Chandavarkar to the 16th Congress session in Lahore in 1900, and of Sir Henry Cotton to the 20th Congress session in Bombay in 1904. (Ibid., Part I, pp. 505, 787-788.)

of India as a single nation, of India as a congeries of different peoples brought together under a single government.

It was in the role of unifier and nationalizer that the Indian National Congress continued to fight the battle for Indian independence. The story of the partition of India is well known; that of the integration of 554 princely States --a masterpiece of diplomacy mediated by patience, skill and political necessity--has now been laid before us.\* If something had been lost through the partition, much had been gained in the residuum by a political unification never before known in the subcontinent. There remained the problem of provincialism. It was the Congress Party, now the party in power, which sought the instrument by which this problem might be resolved. Among the devices fashioned by astute leaders of the Congress, that of the Zonal Council may yet prove to be the most far-reaching.

The Zonal arrangements in effect set regionalism, based upon the rationalizing factors of economics and administration, over against provincialism which, rooted in emotional attachments, carries with it the political dangers inherent in "nationality" theory. As we shall see, the Congress Party first experimented with a zonal pattern for the organization of the party's constructive work. When particularist demands had carried the day to effect the reorganization of states, and, at a time when India's legislators paused to take second sober thoughts about what they had done, the Prime Minister brought forward the Zonal Council solution. This "re-uniting" into Zones was seized upon with relief and enthusiasm and thereupon incorporated into the constitutional machinery of the Indian Union. Such a development has significance not only for a chronicle of events in the governing of India, but also for its role in the continuing experiments in the morphology of federalism. "These councils," remarked Pandit Pant, in his opening address to the first meeting of the Central Zonal Council, "are indeed an interesting experiment in co-operative federalism."

If we are able to prove that the process of consultation amongst democratically constituted governments is capable of solving difficulties and, if necessary, also relieving some strains which are inherent in the

\*The details of both these stories have been carefully recorded in two basic and highly readable books by V. P. Menon: The Story of the Integration of the Indian States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), and The Transfer of Power in India (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).



federal structure, we shall have done something more than solving our own problems.\*

## EARLIER PROPOSALS FOR REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

The complexities and size of the Indian subcontinent required that any proposal for political organization and administration achieve a delicate articulation of many parts and allow for flexibility upon many levels. Before the "two-nation" theory had been realized by the partition of the subcontinent with the creation of an independent Pakistan, a number of proposals had been put forward for the constituting of an independent, undivided Indian State. Among these competing proposals were several which took into consideration factors of a basically regional nature. Of these, the most prominent was that outlined by Reginald Coupland in the third part of his "Report on the Constitutional Problem in India."†

The Coupland Scheme, as it came to be known, was based upon a suggestion made by M. W. M. Yeatts, Census Commissioner for India, who advocated, in his introduction to the Census of India, 1941, a long-term plan for the development of India's water-power resources.§ Coupland also incorporated in his proposal many of the features of the constitutional solution put forward earlier by Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, a prominent Muslim who served as the premier of the Punjab from 1937-1942.

The Coupland Scheme proposed to divide the subcontinent into four regions, each to incorporate princely States as well as established provinces. The regional boundaries were to be demarcated according to an economic or geographical principle: the four regions were to follow the three major river systems, 1) the Indus, 2) the Ganges as far as the Bengal-Bihar border, 3) the Brahmaputra together with the Ganges delta, and 4) the remainder of the country, i.e., the Deccan. These were not only natural divisions, Coupland argued, but they corresponded closely to the concentration of population according to the two major religious communities. The four regions were to federate to establish an "Agency Centre" which would function as the federal authority with minimal powers. The central legislature would be small, each region to have equal representation, and members to be appointed by the regional

\*National Herald, 1957, May 2, 8:5.

†Reginald Coupland, The Indian Problem; Report on the Constitutional Problem in India (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944).

§See Ibid., Part III, p. 119.

legislatures. The Central authority was envisaged as a purely inter-regional institution.

The author of this proposal argued that the plan had merit on economic grounds alone, but that it would, further, satisfy the major claim made by the Muslim League for areas held to be Muslim "homelands," for the Indus and Delta regions would be so constituted as to comprise the predominantly Muslim areas.\*

It will be remembered that it was the communal problem which overshadowed all others in the political atmosphere of the 1940's, and it was this problem above all others to which the regional proposals of Coupland, and of Sikander Hyat Khan had principally been addressed. They were solutions intended to preserve the unity of India, and at the same time to satisfy the communal demand. Regionalism, as Coupland stated, was not partition.† Once the Muslim League had established success for the "two-nation" doctrine and the subcontinent had been divided into two sovereign nations, constitution-makers were presented with a very different set of problems, and with not a few accomplished facts.

It was clear when the Constituent Assembly for the newly independent India began to deliberate upon the proper political and administrative structure to be established for the nation, some form of federalism would be retained. By the fourth session of the Assembly (July, 1947) the question of partition had been decided and the Pakistan demand fulfilled.§ No further concession to the Muslim community in terms of a

\*"Regionalism meets half the Moslem claim," Coupland wrote. "It concedes the first demand of the 'Pakistan Resolution.' It combines those 'geographically contiguous' areas in North-West and North-East India in which the Moslems are in a majority and consolidates them as single political units. It provides the Moslems with national homes which they can call their own. They would be autonomous States, not secondary or subordinate units of administration. The government of the Regions and of the Provinces of which they would be composed would cover almost the whole field of public affairs, including those which most closely and directly affect the daily life of the people." (Coupland, op. cit., Part III, p. 126.)

†Ibid.

§The Assembly first sat on December 9th, 1956 and re-assembled on August 14th, 1957 as the Sovereign Constituent Assembly for India.

weak central government needed to be made. When the draft Constitution was published in February, 1948 the earlier provision for autonomy of states had been dropped in favor of that of a strong Centre with residuary powers vesting in the Union of India.\* The Congress Party's commitment to strength at the Centre eclipsed considerations of regionalism; there was no question of interpolating an administrative or legislative body between the provinces (later designated as states) and the central government.†

The pressures within India--pressures arising from profound attachments to provincial, cultural, linguistic and historical groupings--were such that the homogeneous economic region had, in any event, little chance for serious consideration as the basic political unit. Indian statesmen were seriously beset by sectional demands. Almost a decade later they could turn to the problems which might appropriately be resolved in terms of regional organization. But at the time the Indian Constitution was being drafted, with independence just achieved, and the "vivisection" of the subcontinent only then being realized, the federal solution was clearly not to be fashioned in terms of regions as a base. India's political and constitutional circumstance was characterized by many and varied groups competing for recognition as units of the newly designed Union. The regional organization at that time would only have provided another source of strain upon the federal structure. An assessment made under very different circumstances--in the United States in the 1930's--suggests the

\*In January, 1947 the Assembly adopted the historic Objectives Resolution introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru. The third paragraph of that Resolution read: "Wherein the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the Law of the Constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous Units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom . . ." (Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. I, No. 5, 1946, December 13, p. 57.)

†For a perceptive critical analysis of the regional plan of Professor Coupland and the earlier suggestions of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, see D. R. Gadgil, Federating India, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Publication No. 13, 1945, especially pages 56-68. See also Philip Spratt, India and Constitution Making (Calcutta: Renaissance Publishers, 1948).

fears which regionalism might have aroused at a time when Indian statesmen confronted their task of fashioning the constitution. "A regional organization, whatever its varied form, should not be considered as a new form of sovereignty, even in embryo," concluded the American National Resources Committee as they inquired into problems of regional planning. "It need never develop to the stage where it will have elected officers, a legislative body, and the power to tax. By the same token the region need have no definite body of citizens."\* As we shall see, circumstances had so changed by the time the large-scale reorganization of states was undertaken in India in 1956 that from some quarters was heard the argument in favor of endowing the Zonal Councils with just such powers and developing them to the stage where they would have elected officers and a legislative body. But meanwhile, much had been accomplished by way of integration of territories within the Indian Union, and much had been endured in the exercise of public demand for the creation of "linguistic states."

#### SOME CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

When the Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India came into effect in 1950, the nation was defined as a Union of States. The Parliament, however, was given extensive powers not only to admit and establish new states, but also to increase or diminish the area of any state, to alter the boundaries, to form a new state by separation of territory from any state or by uniting two or more states or parts of states or by uniting any territory to a part of any state.† The flexibility of the Indian Constitution is evidenced in the further provisions governing the Union and its territory. A new state may be admitted, boundaries of states changed, and all consequent changes effected (including provisions as to representation of such states in Parliament)

\*United States National Resources Committee, John M. Gaus, Chairman, Regional Factors in National Planning and Development; Report of the Technical Committee on Regional Planning (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, December, 1935), p. ix.

†Article 3 carried, however, the proviso that no such Bill could be introduced in either House of Parliament except on the recommendation of the President and, in cases where such a Bill affected the boundaries of a state or states (those designated as Part A and Part B States) the views of the legislature of each state so affected would be ascertained by the President, both with respect to the proposal to introduce the Bill and with respect to the provisions of the Bill.

by an ordinary majority of the Union Parliament without going through the amending process provided in Article 368.\*

The Constitution of this "Union of States" has established a federal structure with unitary features,<sup>†</sup> and the relations between the Union and the States are laid down in great detail. Powers granted to the Union Government in times of emergency are so defined as to convert the federal structure into a unitary government. Even in normal times, the Constitution provides techniques of control by the Union Government over state governments.§ Article 256 extends the executive power of the Union "to the giving of such directions to a State as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary" for the compliance of the executive power of the states with the laws made by Parliament. The control of the Union over states may also become effective in certain specific cases, e.g., in communications deemed to be necessary for military or national purposes (Article 257). Yet another provision (Article 252) makes possible the enactment of laws by Parliament relating to subjects within state jurisdiction when empowered to do so by the legislatures of two or more states thereby affected.

During the framing of the Constitution and throughout the subsequent years of its working and interpretation, there has been a strong centralizing tendency. The device of the Zonal Council has had a bearing upon this tendency. As we shall see, the Zonal Council system was conceived as a solution for

\*This was illustrated by the passage of the Andhra State Bill, 1953, as an ordinary Bill. For an authoritative discussion of the implications of the Articles in Part One of the Constitution of India, see Durga Das Basu, Commentary on the Constitution of India (3rd ed., Calcutta: S. C. Sarkar, 1955), Vol. I, pp. 56-57.

†Among the several good analyses of the federal and unitary characteristics of the Indian Constitution are those of Durga Das Basu, op. cit.; Sir William Ivor Jennings, Some Characteristics of the Indian Constitution (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1953) and The Commonwealth in Asia (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951); and Alan Gledhill, The Republic of India; The Development of Its Laws and Constitution (London: Stevens, 1951).

For a stimulating critique of the "quasi-federal" description of the Constitution, see Charles Henry Alexandrowicz, Constitutional Developments in India (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 149-205.

§See Basu, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 299-314.

some of the problems which were inevitably to arise from the dislocation consequent upon the reorganization of states.

Among the Constitutional provisions intended to promote the maximum coordination and cooperation between governments is one which foreshadowed the creation of the Zonal Council system. By Article 263 the President is empowered to establish an Inter-State Council "if at any time it appears to him that the public interests would be served" by its establishment. Such a Council was charged with the duty of

- (a) inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between States;
- (b) investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all of the States, or the Union and one or more of the States, have a common interest; or
- (c) making recommendations upon any such subject and, in particular, recommendations for the better co-ordination of policy and action with respect to that subject.

It has been observed that such a Council need not be a permanent body and that separate Councils could be set up to deal with separate matters.\* The Council's function of coordinating inter-state policy is complementary to Article 252 which provides for Union legislation on inter-state matters by consent of the states concerned.

As India's constitution-makers debated questions of coordination and cooperation among the units of a federation, there lay in the background the pressing need for nationwide economic development. Provisions relating to the regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys, and for adjudication of disputes with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-state river or river valley, were included in India's fundamental law.† As economic planning got underway in India, questions

\*Basu, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 313-314. Reference is made to the Central Council of Health established by the President as an advisory body in 1952, and the Central Council of Local Self-Government constituted in 1954.

†See Constitution of India, Article 262, and Seventh Schedule, List I, Entry 56. Compare the statement made by the United States Technical Committee on Regional Planning regarding "urgent situations" which the Committee noted as demanding attention in the consideration of regional problems in the United States. Among these, the first noted was "the increasingly clear realization of the inadequacy of single States to carry out all planning programs necessary for

of regionalism exercised the minds of those charged with the reconstruction of the nation. It was clear that many ad hoc administrative arrangements would be required to solve problems which bridge the boundaries of India's constituent states. The architects of the new India perceived the need for regional solutions. The danger lay in the pressure of the province to assert pre-eminence over the nation: the threat to regionalism by sectionalism.

When the Constituent Assembly laid down its work, the reorganization of the country along lines of linguistic, cultural homogeneity had been postponed. Popular agitation and political turmoil arising out of deep-seated sentiment for the formation of "linguistic provinces" had yet to reach its apogee. The five features distinguishing regionalism from sectionalism which Professor Howard Odum found of "great significance" in the United States were of even greater significance for India:

. . . regionalism envisages the nation first, making the total national culture the final arbiter, while sectionalism sees the region first and the nation afterward.

. . . sectionalism emphasizes political boundaries and state sovereignty, technical legislation, and local loyalties . . . regionalism connotes component and constituent parts of the national culture.

. . . sectionalism may be likened to cultural inbreeding whereas regionalism is line breeding, or regionalism may be considered as cultural specializations within geographical bounds in an age which continuously demands wider contacts and standardized activities; or it may be the way of quality in a quantity world.

. . . sectionalism is analogous to the old individualism while regionalism features cooperative endeavor.

. . . one of the most critical aspects of sectionalism is that it must ultimately lead to a centralized coercive federalism, which is contrary to the stated ideals of American democracy.\*

If it was of great significance that such distinctions between regionalism and sectionalism be made in the United States in

conserving our national resources, both natural and human, as illustrated by the widespread efforts to negotiate interstate compacts dealing with watersheds, oil conservation, labor standards, and crime prevention." (John M. Gaus, op. cit., p. v.)

\*Quoted in John M. Gaus, op. cit., p. viii.

the 1930's, it is imperative that they attract attention in India in the 1950's. For the ideals of Indian democracy have yet to be fully fashioned.

The first ten years of independence have seen remarkable achievements: the integration of the princely States, the development of regional (inter-state) committees to deal with specific economic problems, the yielding of a reluctant government to popular demands for the reorganization of states on the basis of linguistic-cultural homogeneity. The first of these was an achievement in diplomacy, the second a demonstration of administrative experiment and flexibility, the third a proof that government in India is democratic and responsive. There remains the question of stability. The process of unifying and of integrating is characterized by stress. The political demands for the redrawing of boundaries constitute a chapter in the story of the unification of India perhaps not yet concluded. Whether the denouement brings to full flower the latent threat in persisting "nationality theory," or whether, in satisfying the more pressing demands for provincial recognition, the unifying potential of regionalism will now be realized, may depend upon the wisdom with which devices such as the Zonal Council are designed, and the skill with which they are applied.



## L I N G U I S T I C   P R O V I N C I A L I S M

In the post-independence period of Indian history, the most serious expression of centrifugal tendencies has been that of the popular demand for the formation of linguistic states. In this development, attended as it has been by the emergence of passionate regional loyalties, divisive factors have been dramatically disclosed. Nevertheless, the case for the formation of linguistic states can, and has, been argued on the basis of Indian national unity in as positive a sense as has the case against linguistic states. Those who were in the forefront of this agitation held that the patchwork system of political units inherited from the British must be revised and that Indian national unity depended upon the satisfaction of India's several peoples within their several cultural and linguistic regions. The Andhra, the Maharashtrian, the Kannadiga, runs this argument, for all their eagerness to have administrative units based upon their respective Telugu-speaking, Marathi-speaking, or Kannada-speaking areas, are nonetheless Indian. The case is made in consideration of such rationalizing factors as the conduct of each state's administration, legislation, and education in one (indigenous) language, and not alone in terms of regional sentiment.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT FOR LINGUISTIC PROVINCES

The movement for redrawing state boundaries on the basis of linguistic and cultural homogeneity has had a long history. Formation of linguistic provinces was one of the early political demands of the Indian National Congress in the struggle for increasing self-government. Since the Nagpur Session of 1920 the Congress Party itself had been organized more or less upon a linguistic basis with linguistic provinces forming its major units.\* When, in 1928, a Committee was appointed by the All Parties Conference† to draft a

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\*The word 'province' was used during the period when the major political units in British India were known as 'provinces' and the term 'state' referred to the territory ruled by an Indian Prince. The Constitution of India (1950) adopted the word 'state' for all major political units and the term 'province' was gradually replaced by 'state' in subsequent discussion of the redrawing of boundaries. The Congress continues to use the word pradesh (perhaps best translated as 'province') in referring to the units of its party organization.

†Among the parties represented in the All Parties Conference were the Indian National Congress, Muslim League,

Constitution for "a full and responsible" government in India, it was held to be "clear that there must be a redistribution of provinces." The principles governing this redistribution, the Committee reported, should be partly geographical and partly economic and financial, but the main considerations must necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area concerned.\*

In subsequent years, the Congress repeatedly went on record favoring the redistribution of provinces on linguistic lines. The party's election manifesto for the 1945-46 elections proclaimed that the Congress stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas of Provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis.†

Given the political climate of the mid-1940's in India--with the Muslim separatist claim gaining in strength, and with an irredentist tendency evident among other communities, the recognition of the right of "each group and territorial area" to freedom of development was essential in the designing of a popular political program. Nevertheless, the Congress stated its "linguistic provinces" principle with restraint. Provinces should be constituted "as far as possible" on a linguistic and cultural basis, the Congress manifesto for the 1945-46 elections read, and each group and territorial area was to be left free to develop its own life and culture "within the larger framework." It is instructive to compare the Congress position with that taken by the Communist Party in this early period.

Defining the Communist Party's election program, General Secretary P. C. Joshi issued a statement in Bombay in October 1945 which included the following passage:

Hindu Mahasabha, and Sikh League. The chairman of the Constitution Committee was Motilal Nehru (the eminent lawyer, and father of Jawaharlal Nehru).

\*All Parties Conference 1928: Report of the Committee appointed by the Conference to determine the principles of the Constitution for India (Allahabad: All-India Congress Committee, 1928), pp. 61-62.

†Handbook for Congressmen (New Delhi: Indian National Congress [n.d.]), p. 98.

We will demand that the constitution-making body should be based on three principles: firstly, universal adult suffrage, secondly, sovereign Constituent Assemblies for each national area, and lastly, the delegates to the Constitution-making body [to] be elected by these sovereign Constituent Assemblies.\*

It became clear that the Communists had in mind not only the Muslim League demand for a separate Islamic State, but also the pursuit of a nationality theory which contained many seeds of separatism.† "The acute differences between the Congress and the League on the issue of Constituent Assembly," stated the Communist Party Memorandum to the Cabinet Mission (April 15th, 1946) "can only be settled by the just application of the principle of self-determination." This memorandum went on to suggest that the provisional government in India be charged with redrawing the provincial boundaries "on the basis of natural ancient homelands of every people, so that the redemarcated Provinces become as far as possible linguistically and culturally homogeneous National Units." This principle of self-determination was explicitly spelled out as carrying with it the right of the people of each such unit "to decide freely whether they join the Indian Union or form a

\*Mitra, 1945, July-December, Vol. II, p. 121. Emphasis supplied.

†Even though the Communist position on "nationality" in India varied with the succeeding shifts of interpretation by Moscow theorists, the support to the movement for Pakistan, and to other separatist claims, persisted. As early as 1942 the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India adopted a declaration which sought "the right of autonomous state existence on its own territory as an equal and free member of the future Indian Union or Federation accompanied by the unconditional right to political secession." In his report on this declaration, G. Adhikari explained that it not only corresponded "to the essence of the demand of the Muslim League" [based upon the Lahore Resolution from which Adhikari quoted], but that the Communist solution conceded to the "'constituent units' of the zones specified in this resolution--namely to Sind, N. W. F. Province, Punjab and Eastern districts of Bengal, the right of self-determination to the point of secession." Adhikari continued: "This means these states, whose exact boundaries could be determined by the people later, can be autonomous and sovereign and form the federation within an Indian Union or they may secede and form their federation without." (G. Adhikari, ed., Pakistan and National Unity [Bombay: People's Publishing House (n.d.)], pp. 14 and 46-47.)

separate sovereign State or another Indian Union." The Communist statement concluded with the argument that only on the basis of such a principle could Indian unity be preserved.\*

Once more, in this early formative period before the people of India had given to themselves a constitution, the Communists pressed the case for self-determination. In the moving of an amendment in the Constituent Assembly to the Resolution on Declaration of Objectives (which had been introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru on December 13th, 1946), a Communist Member, Somnath Lahiri, assailed the Congress for having conceded in the Objectives Resolution the right of "autonomy and residuary power" without having given the "right of secession to linguistic, etc., units."† Lahiri went on to note that the Congress had "never unequivocally recognised this right of separation of the nationalities on national-linguistic basis . . ." In arguing against a "unitary constitution," Lahiri urged that not only could the Congress not "hope to win over the Muslim population of Bengal" (Lahiri was a general Member of the Assembly from Bengal) but, he added, "this is not the way you would hope to win over the other nationalities which will come into the forefront as time goes by."§ The Communists had clearly placed themselves on record as favoring the right of such "nationalities" to determine whether they would join the Indian Union or form a separate state.\*\*

As the debate continued in the Constituent Assembly, the question of linguistic states was touched upon at several points. Much of the discussion centered upon the Fundamental Rights Chapter, especially the articles dealing with the protection of the interests of minorities and the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. "One of the most important rights that any community can claim," declared Pandit H. N. Kunzru in the Constituent Assembly, "related to language and culture."†† He saw in the draft article (later to become Article 29) the effective safeguarding of the right of minorities to conserve distinct

\*Mitra, 1946, January-June, Vol. I, pp. 220-221.

†Constituent Assembly Debates (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1946), Vol. I, No. 9, p. 131.

§Ibid., p. 132.

\*\*See Mitra, 1946, January-June, Vol. I, pp. 220-221.

††Constituent Assembly Debates, 1948, December 8, Vol. VII, No. 22, p. 919.

languages, scripts, and cultures. Jaipal Singh, who consistently opposed the formation of linguistic states, expressed the hope that this Article in the Constitution would give the linguistic minorities confidence so that proper weight might be given to other factors in the constituting of states.\*

The comment of K. Santhanam who saw in the question of the linguistic minorities "one of the most difficult problems which free India will have to face," proved to be prophetic. "The problems of religious majorities and of scheduled castes," he said,

are legacies of the past, and I expect that in the near future they will simply lapse owing to the lapse of time and owing to circumstances. But the question of the linguistic minorities will be a problem for many decades to come and I am afraid it is going to cause the country a great deal of trouble. . . .†

#### Sub-Nationalism: The Dar Commission's Opinion

To advise the Constituent Assembly in its deliberations upon the question of linguistic states, a Linguistic Provinces Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of S. K. Dar, a former Judge of the Allahabad High Court.§ The appointment of such a Commission was recommended by the Constitution Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly at the time that Committee was considering the question of listing Andhra as a separate state in the First Schedule of the Constitution. The President of the Constituent Assembly, acting upon the Drafting Committee's recommendation, appointed the Dar Commission "to examine and report on the formation of new Provinces of Andhra, Karnatak, Kerala and Maharashtra and on

\*Ibid., p. 907.

†Ibid., p. 909.

§The other members of the Commission were Dr. Panna Lal, former advisor to the Governor of the U. P., and Jagat Narayan Lal, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bihar. Associate members included four representatives from Madras (one each from Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala and Karnatak), three from Bombay (one each from Gujarat, Karnatak, and Maharashtra), and two from the Central Provinces and Berar (one each from Maharashtra and Mahakoshal).

the administrative, financial and other consequences of the creation of such new Provinces."\*

The Dar Commission report, submitted in December 1948, put before the Assembly a strong case against the immediate formation of linguistic states on the grounds that circumstances obtaining in independent India were very different from those characterizing periods when the Congress had declared for the redistribution of provinces. The paramount need of India, in this Commission's opinion, was that it should become a nation; everything which threw obstacles in the way of the growth of national unity must be rejected. Judged by this test, their report argued, linguistic states could not be supported.

The claim for linguistic states was summed up as resting upon two alternative grounds: that the linguistic groups are sub-nations and, as such, contracting parties to the Constitution from which the Federation and the Centre derive their existence and power; or alternatively, that the existing provinces are unwieldy, heterogeneous, and administratively inconvenient. The case against the formation of linguistic provinces pointed to the intolerance which they might breed against the minority speaking a different language in the same province, the parochial patriotism which they would emphasize, and the bitterness which would be caused by the delimitation of boundaries. The report further noted:

The arguments in favour of the immediate formation of linguistic provinces are that on account of Congress pledges the demand has got deep down into the masses and its postponement is creating bitterness, impatience and frustration and the country cannot settle down to constructive work till the demand is conceded . . .

The arguments in favour of its postponement are that the country is not yet free from the dangers of external aggression, that it is in the grip of an economic crisis of great magnitude, that Indian States have not yet been properly integrated, that the Government is pre-occupied with more urgent problems,

\*For the text of the recommendation of the Drafting Committee, the list of members and associate members, and the terms of reference of the Commission, see Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, Constituent Assembly of India (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1948), Appendix I, pp. 38-39.

that the country cannot at this moment bear the financial and administrative strain which these new provinces will put upon it . . .\*

If the new provinces based upon linguistic homogeneity were to be formed, the Dar Commission advised, they would be deficit provinces. Observing that linguistic provinces would have a "sub-national bias" and would militate against the welding of India into one nation, the Commission held that it could be "safely assumed that linguistic groups as sub-nations do not exist anywhere at present," and went on to warn that "if the intention were to bring sub-nations into existence, there could not be a better way of doing it" than by creating linguistic states.† The Commission considered the following conditions as prerequisite for an area to be properly formed into a state: geographical contiguity, financial self-sufficiency, capacity for future development, and the consent of the people affected. Their Report suggested that at some time in the future, when the status of the Indian princely States had been determined and when Indian nationality had been well-established, some of the existing states of the Union could be reconstituted. The Commission made it clear that such redistribution should be based not upon linguistic considerations, but upon administrative convenience and effectiveness.

As we have seen, the Constituent Assembly made no attempt to effect an immediate redistribution of states. Nevertheless, there was a thorough-going awareness that the problem had only been postponed and would have to be dealt with later. The Constitution was so framed that any future plan of realignment of states would meet with no constitutional difficulties. Strong proponents of the linguistic states principle --such as N. V. Gadgil, who continued to work with great persistence for the creation of Samyukta Maharashtra (a united Maharashtrian State made up of Marathi-speaking areas) were content to accept for the time being the Fundamental Rights provision guaranteeing protection to minorities, together with Article Three of the Constitution which provided for the speedy reorganization of states without amendment of the Constitution.§

\*Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, pp. 2-3.

†Ibid., p. 28.

§See Gadgil's comments in the Constituent Assembly, October 14th, 1949, Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. X, No. 8, pp. 319-320.

The Linguistic Principle Conceded: The JVP Report

The Dar Commission report was received with general disappointment throughout India, and in the South where the interest in redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis was most intense, the public response was clearly antagonistic.\* There were allegations that the Commission had proceeded upon the assumption that they should recommend a postponement, that they had gone beyond their terms of reference, and that the personnel of the Commission, all from Hindi-speaking areas, were at the outset unsympathetic to the demand for redistribution. Although serious attention was given to the financial problems posed by consideration of redrawing of boundaries, there was widespread opinion that the disruptive tendency of linguistic dissatisfactions outweighed all other considerations. When the Indian National Congress met on December 18th at Jaipur for its 1948 Session the issue of formation of linguistic states had become critical.

The president of the Congress, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, observed in his address to the Jaipur Congress Session, that "the question of linguistic redistribution is a major question, the solution of which cannot be put off for long." The Congress, clearly dissatisfied with the Dar Commission report, then appointed a three-member Committee to review the position and "to examine the question in the light of the decisions taken by the Congress in the past and the requirements of the existing situation." The Committee's terms of reference included a reconsideration of the report of the Dar Commission and "the new problems that have arisen out of the achievement of independence."†

The Congress Linguistic Provinces Committee Report--known popularly as the JVP Report from the initials of the names of the three Committee members (Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Pattabhi Sitaramayya) conditionally conceded the principle of linguistic redistribution of states.§ But the

\*For reports on the manner in which the Dar recommendations were received, see The Hindu, 1948, December 14 and 15.

†Report of the Linguistic Provinces Committee (New Delhi: Indian National Congress, 1949), p. 1.

§Summing up its recommendations, the Committee stated that "if public sentiment is insistent and overwhelming, we, as democrats, have to submit to it, but subject to certain limitations in regard to the good of India as a whole . . ." (Ibid., p. 15.)



Committee was clearly concerned--as had been the Dar Commission--with the supreme need to concentrate upon security, unity and economic prosperity, and to discourage separatist and disruptive tendencies. It was not, said the Committee, an "opportune time" for the formation of new provinces, for:

It would unmistakably retard the process of consolidation of our gains, dislocate our administrative, economic and financial structure, let loose, while we are still in a formative stage, forces of disruption and disintegration, and seriously interfere with the progressive solution of our economic and political difficulties.\*

The JVP Committee explicitly recognized that conditions had changed from the days when the Congress Party gave "the seal of its approval" to the general principle of linguistic provinces. Meanwhile, the entire map of India had been transformed. "There can be no greater error than to think of today in terms of yesterday, or to seek to solve today's problems in terms of yesterday's."† The Committee recommended that redistribution be considered only "after careful thought being given to each separate case," and gave the question of formation of a separate Andhra State the first priority:

The case of Andhra . . . can be isolated from others, in that, . . . there appears to be a large measure of consent behind it and the largest compact area likely to form part of this linguistic province is situated in one province. We would, therefore, suggest that, if a start has to be made, we should take up first for study and examination the problems arising out of the separation of Andhra province and ascertain if . . . this province could be separated. If the necessary conditions are achieved, we recommend that measures may be taken to implement it.§

This Committee further expressed the opinion that a Maharashtra province could be formed subject to conditions similar to those laid down for Andhra and to the constitution of "a separate unit of Greater Bombay."\*\* With regard to Kerala and Karnatak, the Committee stated that the new provinces could only be formed in conjunction with certain

\*Ibid., p. 9.

†Ibid., pp. 2-4.

§Ibid., pp. 14-15.

\*\*Ibid., p. 14.

states--Travancore and Cochin in the case of Kerala, and Mysore and Hyderabad in the case of Karnatak--which would form substantial parts of the new provinces. "This can be brought about," said the Report, "not by a merger of the present provincial areas into the States, but by the reverse process and must entail virtual disappearance of these States." The Committee recommended that adjustments of provincial boundaries in northern India could not be considered although some rectifications of boundaries might "ultimately" be necessary.

The conditions set forth by the Congress Committee as necessary for the formation of a separate Andhra State were to play an important role in the controversy which was to develop later. These conditions were:

- (1) the State was to consist of "well defined areas mutually agreed upon" and be "confined to the Province of Madras"
- (2) it was to be formed with the "willingness and consent of the other component parts of Madras Province"
- (3) Andhras were to "abandon their claims to the City of Madras."\*

The response to the JVP Report was generally more favorable than it had been to the Dar Commission Report. It was well received in Andhra where leaders looked for early consideration of the formation of a separate Andhra State. In Maharashtra and Karnatak disappointment ran high and the issue of linguistic states became a political lever for parties in opposition to the Congress. If it became one of the main tasks of Congress propaganda to make the idea of postponing the redistribution of provinces acceptable to the public, this had only followed upon the realization of Congressmen in positions of public responsibility that the problems of economic sufficiency, administrative integrity, and decisions over disputed areas could jeopardize the stability of government and progress in national development.

Subsequent to endorsement of the JVP Report by the Congress Working Committee and upon the request of the central government, Madras set up a Partition Committee which made recommendations to the Government of India. The Union Government on January 24th, 1950, issued a communique announcing that lack of agreement on essential issues such as the status of Madras City, the apportionment of assets and liabilities, the boundaries of the province (particularly with

\*Ibid., p. 14.

respect to Bellary District), the position of Rayalaseema\* and finances of the new province made the formation of Andhra impracticable.† The communique concluded with the declaration that the Government of India considered it essential that before the question could be taken up again, the outstanding differences and unresolved questions should first be settled.§

Demands for the formation of linguistic states increased as the debate continued over the two Reports and over the Government's reaction to their recommendations. Especially in Andhra where 'national' (provincial) sentiment had steadily mounted since the publication of the Dar Commission Report, agitation for a separate state intensified and was promoted by the major political parties. The opposition made capital out of the increasingly evident reluctance of the government to commit itself to an early formation of linguistic states. (This was especially manifest in Maharashtra, Kerala and Karnatak, where proponents of linguistic states had been keenly disappointed by the JVP Report.) In the 1951 election campaign the Congress took its uneasy stand on the issue by the following declaration in the party's election manifesto:

A demand for a re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis has been persistently made in the south and west of India. The Congress expressed itself in favour of linguistic provinces many years ago. A decision on this question ultimately depends upon the wishes of the people concerned. While linguistic reasons have undoubtedly a certain cultural and other importance, there are other factors also such as economic, administrative and financial, which have to

\*Rayalaseema is that area of inland Madras lying between Hyderabad and Mysore States and comprising the districts of Kurnool, Anantapur, Cuddapah, Chittoor, and Bellary.

†The Andhra Partition Committee could not achieve an agreement between Andhra and non-Andhra members and their efforts broke down on the demand of the Andhra members to retain Andhra headquarters in Madras City until the Andhras could decide on a capital. The non-Andhra members rejected the demand outright on grounds of constitutional and legal difficulties. There was also lack of agreement among Andhra leaders on the acceptance of Andhra State without Madras City and whether Rayalaseema should be included or not. (Report of the General Secretaries, October 1951--January 1953 [New Delhi: All-India Congress Committee, 1953], pp. 52-53.)

§Report of the General Secretaries, January 1949--September 1950 (New Delhi: All-India Congress Committee [n.d.]), pp. 56-57.

be taken into consideration. Where such a demand represents the agreed views of the people concerned, the necessary steps prescribed by the Constitution, including the appointment of a Boundary Commission, should be taken.\*

After the first general elections, there was considerable interest shown in the probable political composition of a potential Andhra State. Political opponents of the Congress pointed out that redistribution of states on linguistic lines would weaken the hold of the Congress Party in the South where opposition parties, and especially the Communists, had won significant election victories. Of the 62 Communist Members in the Madras Legislative Assembly, 41 were elected from undisputed Andhra districts. It was clear that in an Andhra State Assembly the Communist Party could command the largest single majority. Of the 140 seats of the Madras Assembly from Andhra districts, only 40 were held by the Congress.†

#### ANDHRA: THE FIRST LINGUISTIC STATE FORMED AFTER INDEPENDENCE

During the summer of 1951, the agitation for a separate Andhra State became acute. Swami Sitaram, a long-time Congress leader, entered upon a series of fasts and organized popular campaigns through which he and his followers attempted to persuade the government to declare its "unambiguous intention" of creating the new state. On September 14th (1951), during a fast by Sitaram which threatened to take the life of the Andhra leader, Pandit Nehru replied to a question in the Parliament: "Government will submit to facts, not to fasts." Six days later the Swami was persuaded to break his fast, but only after an assurance from Vinoba Bhave, the Gandhian constructive worker (and leader of the Bhoodan movement) that the government was doing all it could for the creation of an Andhra State.

\*Handbook for Congressmen (New Delhi: Indian National Congress [n.d.]), p. 115.

†An Andhra State Assembly composed of legislators from undisputed Andhra districts (exclusive of the Telugu-speaking areas of Hyderabad) would have been divided as follows:

Communists	41
Congress	40
Praja Socialists	26
Krishikar Lok	15
Scheduled Castes Federation	1
Independents	17
	<u>140</u>

In July 1952 Prime Minister Nehru spoke against a Communist resolution in the Lower House of Parliament for immediate creation of linguistic states, but declared his support for a separate Andhra provided there was agreement on Madras City and Rayalaseema.

The Andhra demand had sufficient popular appeal to extend across party lines. However, it was the Communist Party which organized much of the effective agitation for the formation of a separate Telugu-speaking state, as well as of other linguistic states in the South. The Socialist Party's National Executive declared itself in favor of linguistic states in general, but directed party units not to become involved in demarcation disputes. The Socialists urged the establishment of boundary commissions.

By the autumn of 1952, differences among Andhra leaders had developed over the manner in which Andhra should be separated from Madras, and over the details of the constitution of the new state. Swami Sitaram had intensified his struggle, but failed to carry the United Democratic Front with him. The Socialist-led Front alleged that the Swami's followers planned to ask for a state to be immediately formed with disputed areas left out and for a government-nominated Assembly which would exclude Communists. In October, the Vijayawada Socialist Party (on the advice of Asoka Mehta of the Party's National Executive) suspended its support of Swami Sitaram. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister of Madras had declared that the campaign led by the Swami was an attempt to set up a parallel government, though he later conceded that if Andhra would give up the claim to Madras City he would support the Andhra demand for a separate state.

The controversy had become especially bitter over the disposition of Madras City. Spokesmen from the Rayalaseema area declared that they would never agree to the formation of an Andhra State which did not include the City of Madras, whereas Congress circles were rent with disagreement between Tamils and Andhras as to the future of the City. The Communists maintained a firm position which sought to award Madras City to the residual Madras State. Andhra Communists, by urging a plebiscite to decide the City's future, were, in effect, reaffirming the Party's position that "Madras belongs to the Tamilians," for no one doubted but that the Tamil-dominated City would, in a plebiscite, vote to remain with Madras State. The holding of a plebiscite would, moreover, make less likely the proposal that Madras City be made a centrally-administered City-State--a recommendation which had been made by the Dar Commission, and which had been vigorously opposed by the Communists. Among other suggestions was one which urged settlement by arbitration and another which went so far as to recommend the partition of the City. A not inconsiderable section of opinion favored the creation of

Greater Andhra including not only the City of Madras but Hyderabad City and the Telugu-speaking areas of Hyderabad.

The government had taken a position based upon the findings of the JVP Congress Committee on Linguistic Provinces and had insisted that agreement among the peoples of Madras State--among Andhras themselves and between Andhras and Tamils --was prerequisite to further consideration of the question. Prime Minister Nehru, addressing the Upper House of Parliament early in December, made it clear that the City of Madras would, in no case, be included in an Andhra State.

Towards the end of 1952, the agitation for a separate Andhra State drew to a dramatic climax. A respected Andhra patriot and a veteran of the independence movement, Potti Sriramulu, entered upon a fast "unto death" for the formation of a separate Telugu-speaking state. During the month of November, when Andhra was wracked by intensifying agitation and many incidents of violence, Sriramulu persisted in his fasting. On December 16th, 58 days after he had launched his fast, Sriramulu died. When last rites were performed in Madras, the leader of the non-communist opposition to Congress delivered a moving funeral oration which charged the government with indifference and threatened to launch a program of action "similar to that adopted for ending the alien rule."\* On the same day, Nehru, addressing a tense and excited Parliament, said that everyone deeply regretted "this ultimate consummation in death of the fast undertaken by Mr. Potti Sriramulu," but he reminded the House that "we have expressed our opinions on various occasions about the extreme undesirability of adopting that course for furthering any cause. . . ." The Prime Minister referred to his earlier statement in the Upper House,

I repeat that we are perfectly prepared to proceed as early as possible on the basis of the JVP Report. . . . steps should be taken to constitute an Andhra State in regard to unchallenged and uncontested Telugu areas of Madras State, it being clearly understood that the city of Madras is not included in this.†

Events moved rapidly to advance the creation of a separate Andhra and to stem the divisive tendencies which threatened disaffection in other parts of India. On December 19th, Prime Minister Nehru announced that his government "had decided to establish an Andhra State consisting of the Telugu-speaking areas of the present Madras State, but not including

\*The Hindu, 1952, December 18, 6:5.

†The Hindu, 1952, December 17, 4:6.

the City of Madras," and that the Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court (K. N. Wanchoo) was being appointed to report on the financial and other implications of this decision.\*

Following the announcement of the decision by the government to go ahead with the formation of Andhra State, controversy continued over such issues as the location of the capital of the new state and the disposition of the City of Madras. These were complex questions not confined to the matter of adjudicating between the rival claims of Andhras and Tamils, or to the vital economic and financial considerations of the nascent Andhra State. The political ramifications of the question were extensive, and involved the further question of the disintegration of Hyderabad along linguistic lines. Hyderabad City, it was argued, would become the natural capital for a Greater Andhra. Such a development was, indeed, to come, but not immediately, for the Union Government, in its decision of 1952, had confined the new state to the Andhra districts of Madras.

As the country responded to the achievement of the Andhras in gaining a separate state, misgivings over the implications of redrawing India's internal boundaries according to the principle of linguistic and cultural homogeneity were widely expressed.† The Communist role in the linguistic states movement was not overlooked. It was noted that as soon as Prime Minister Nehru's announcement on the formation of Andhra had been made to the Lower House of Parliament, a Communist Member rose to voice the demand for a Kerala State, while in the Upper House, another Communist made a similar move on behalf of Karnatak (a Kannada-speaking state).§ The Calcutta Statesman editorially attacked Communist nationality theory:

The Communists point to the success of the "nationalities" policy in their spiritual fatherland. They neglect to add that its greatest success is in diverting genuine nationalist aspirations into channels which are chiefly cultural (and even so strictly controlled). It is colonialism in its most enervating form. Here in India, the intention seems to be entirely different: to use the cultural aspirations of

\*The Hindustan Times, 1952, December 20, 1:2. Justice Wanchoo submitted his report on February 7th, 1953.

†For a survey of press comment on the concession of Andhra, see Indian Press Digests, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 77-88.

§The Hindu, 1952, December 21, 6:6.

sections of the Indian people in order to destroy the nation.\*

This observer pointed out that the Andhra demand had been backed by some who "recognized the dangers of linguism," chiefly because of their fear that otherwise the Telugu areas "would fall permanently under Communist control," and summed up a significant opinion on the decision to form the new state, in these words:

Apart from careerists and some 'incontrovertible' champions of linguism, it seems likely that the only people who are wholly satisfied with the Andhra State announcement are the Communists. 'We,' they can claim, 'are responsible.' At least in one sense they are.†

Many observers saw difficulties ahead on the "slippery slopes of linguism," and some suggested that Nehru, in conceding the Andhra demand, had bowed to pressure. There was, however, a substantial segment of opinion which held that the government could scarcely have taken any other decision. A Times of India commentator drew the sting from adverse comment by viewing the government's decision as essentially a triumph of democracy:

In bowing to the Andhra demand, backed though it was by a coercive fast and rioting, Mr. Nehru bowed to Democracy. A normal, routine reaction of a government to such a situation would be to 'refuse to be coerced' and to meet force with force. It speaks for Mr. Nehru's faith in and loyalty to democracy.§

During the Spring of 1953 the government decided that a commission, empowered to study and to make detailed recommendations with regard to the redrawing of the boundaries of India's internal political units, should be established. On April 28th, Nehru announced at a public meeting in Belgaum that such a commission on linguistic states would be appointed after the new Andhra State had been established so that its progress could be followed for "some time--say, one year."\*\*\* On May 16th, the Congress Working Committee welcomed the proposal to constitute a states reorganization commission.††

\*The Statesman, 1952, December 21.

†Ibid.

§Times of India, 1952, December 23.

\*\*The Hindustan Times, 1953, April 29, 1:1.

††The Hindustan Times, 1953, May 17, 1:1.



This proposal won wide favor; it tended also to suggest that the government had become even further committed to the proposition that the states must be reorganized.

When, on August 10th, 1953, Home Minister K. N. Katju introduced the Andhra State Bill in the Lower House of Parliament, the Government of India launched the final phase in the creation of a separate Telugu-speaking State. Passed amidst resounding cheers, in both Houses of Parliament, the Bill was signed into law by the President on September 14th.

The creation of an Andhra State won overwhelming support in Parliament, but debate on the Bill provided opportunity for arguing yet again the cases for and against reorganization of India's component states on the principle of linguistic-cultural homogeneity. Only a few Members withheld congratulation to the government for having created the new state. Frank Anthony, leader of the Anglo-Indian community and a nominated Member of the Lower House, voiced the only unmitigated opposition. "You are performing not an act of folly, but an act of treason," he told the House. The conception of linguistic states spelled "cultural death" rather than cultural autonomy for linguistic minorities in India, and, argued Anthony, the only "real safeguard to linguistic minorities" was the "preservation of multi-lingual states." He described the concession of Andhra as "political opportunism" which represented a "mood of weakness and vacillation" on the part of the government.\*

Among those who gave qualified support to the official Bill was Dr. N. B. Khare, leader of the Hindu Mahasabha and of the National Democratic Group in the House, who characterized the Bill as "belated" and "half-hearted."†

Whereas Dr. Khare's criticism was directed against the government's handling of the Andhra matter, and not against the principle of linguistic states, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, leader of the Praja Socialist Party in the House, attacked the principle itself as undermining the fundamental unity of India.§ Kripalani delivered a long and vigorous speech in

\*Quotations in this section are from reports of debate on the Andhra State Bill in the House of the People (August 13th to August 27th) and the Council of States (September 2nd to September 12th).

†During debate on August 27th in the House of the People. (The Hindustan Times, 1953, August 28, 1:7.)

§During debate on August 17th, House of the People. (The Hindustan Times, 1953, August 18, 1:6.)

which he wished the new state "Godspeed," but keenly criticized the Congress Party's handling of the entire problem of linguistic redistribution of states. "It was an evil day," he argued, when the Congress first formulated the proposition of linguistic provinces. But, he concluded, since "we have raised a monster," linguistic redistribution of states should be completed "quickly and boldly."

The Andhra State Bill was received in the Upper House, as it had been in the Lower House, with general support and enthusiasm together with only occasional opposition and criticism. Pandit H. N. Kunzru noted "with misgivings" the bitterness in Andhra and the "staggering" financial problems of the state, and he warned that the creation of new states would increase the financial burden on the Centre.\*

The argument was advanced by a few speakers in both Houses of Parliament that Andhra should be the first and the last linguistic state formed. This was the position of a Congress Member from Uttar Pradesh who urged that the country be divided into three large segments (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Dakshina Pradesh)--a foreshadowing of the zonal arrangements which were later to develop.†

Debate on the Andhra Bill was, however, more frequently used to press forward demands for the creation of other separate linguistic states--demands for a separate Karnatak, a united Maharashtra, a Kerala State, Greater Gujarat, or for a Punjabi-speaking State. All Members of the Lower House from Hyderabad supported Raghavendra Rao (Congress) when, during debate, he urged the disintegration of Hyderabad.§ Several other speakers viewed dismemberment of Hyderabad as essential, and proposed not only the formation of United Karnatak and a separate Maharashtra, but also of Vishal Andhra (an enlarged Andhra State to include the Telugu-speaking districts of Hyderabad). N. V. Gadgil, vigorously defending the principle of linguistic states, described Hyderabad as a "political monstrosity."

\*During debate in the Council of States, September 5th. (The Hindustan Times, 1953, September 6, 7:5.)

†See the speech of H. P. Saxena in the Council of States on September 12th. For a similar point see also the speech of N. R. M. Swamy, National Democratic Member from Madras.

§On August 19th. (The Hindustan Times, 1953, August 20, 1:6.)

The official position continued to be one of cautious concession to the linguistic states principle. Home Minister Katju emphasized the unity of India which, he said, was more important than language. He recommended that the national language, Hindi, be made a "household possession of every single person in the land."\* Repeatedly Dr. Katju drew attention to the proposed Commission which was to investigate and report upon the problem of reorganization of states. He urged direct reference to the Commission of all cases involving redrawing of state boundaries, and added that the Commission would be a "very powerful body, with wide terms of reference." From every sector of Parliament came expression of satisfaction at the proposed establishment of such a Commission.

### Response to the Andhra State Act

Outside the Parliament, the national debate on the question of linguistic states continued: political parties adopted resolutions on linguistic states, groups devoted to the achievement of linguistic states organized meetings and demonstrations, and the press was active both in reporting and commenting upon the public response.

The Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution (on September 20th) declaring that public agitation for the formation of new states was "undesirable and uncalled for" in view of the government's decision to appoint a Commission to examine the many aspects of the problem. On the other hand, an All-India Linguistic States Conference (meeting on September 27th) demanded that the government proceed to establish linguistic states six months after the appointment of the Commission. This demand was variously described as "the height of irresponsibility"† and, on the other hand, as having given a "definite lead" which was to be welcomed.§

There was little new in the arguments advanced both in the Parliament and in the press. Reassessment of the demand for linguistic states was most often expressed in terms of recognition that concessions had to be made to the principle. Most observers wished the new State of Andhra every success, and many agreed with The Eastern Economist's position (of September 4th) that unity could not have been developed so long as "a deepseated aspiration" remained unfulfilled. But

\*In his reply to debate in the House of the People on August 20th.

†By The Hitavada, September 29th.

§By the Amrita Bazar Patrika, September 29th.

those who counselled caution in proceeding with the formation of other states on a linguistic basis, once more suggested that the movement threatened national unity, endangered the Five Year Plan, and increased pressures on already strained financial resources.

The decision of the government to appoint a Commission to study the problem of reorganization of states was enthusiastically welcomed in the press as it had been in Parliament. There was widespread feeling that agitation and controversy should be avoided so that the Commission could be free to carry out its task in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Even Crossroads, the Communist Party organ, which had been vigorously critical of the government's attitude toward linguistic states, said that the Commission would make it possible for the "democratic movement in all linguistic areas to come forward with proposals for the revision of boundaries in such a way as to realise their goal of formation of their respective Linguistic States." This Crossroads editorial added a noteworthy directive to "all democratic parties, organisations, and groups" to carry on an "unceasing campaign among the people against the tendency to make unjustifiable claims for the inclusion of parts of other linguistic areas in one's own linguistic area."\* The context in which this directive was issued suggests that the Communists may well have been embarrassed by the concession of a demand which they had so fully exploited, and that a directive urging restraint in the pressing of "unjustifiable claims" may have been a reaction to stresses within the party. As we shall see, the Communists continued to use the linguistic states issue to further their own political ends. Meanwhile, they could join others in an appeal to preserve the peace.

### The Inauguration of Andhra State

As the date of the Andhra State inauguration approached, many uncertainties which had characterized the formation of the state and its government were resolved. It was agreed that the Rayalaseema city of Kurnool should be the state's temporary capital. The decision of T. Prakasam (the erstwhile leader of the non-Communist opposition to the Congress in Andhra) to leave the Praja Socialist Party and to become an associate member of the Congress Party in order to form the Ministry, assured the new government popular leadership at the top. The spectre of President's rule which had given considerable anxiety to officials and observers alike was

\*Crossroads, 1953, September 6.

laid.\* Chandulal Trivedi had been appointed Governor for Andhra--an appointment which received virtually universal approval. It was widely recognized that Trivedi's experience would stand the new state in good stead, for he had not only served the Government of India as Defense Secretary, but had been Governor of Orissa and Governor of the Punjab during the difficult period of partition.

On October 1st, Andhra State was inaugurated by Prime Minister Nehru in Kurnool. The new state's cabinet with T. Prakasam as Chief Minister, and N. Sanjiva Reddy (the leader of the Congress Party in the state) as Deputy Chief Minister, were sworn in by Governor Trivedi. Over 100,000 people attended the ceremonies in which the Chief Ministers of Madras, Mysore and Hyderabad participated. Prime Minister Nehru, in his inaugural address, emphasized the need for national unity and the importance of avoiding both communal and caste dissension.†

\*Early in September many press commentators expressed belief that Andhra would begin its life as a separate state with President's rule--the assumption of administrative control by the President under his emergency powers. Some of them welcomed this prospect. Organiser (September 7) held that President's rule would not "surprise anybody," and that elections would be held soon after inauguration of the state. Amrita Bazar Patrika's commentator, Krishnalal Shridharani, observed (September 21) that the only alternative to T. Prakasam as the first Chief Minister appeared to be President's rule, and added that no party in Andhra wanted a new election. The question of President's rule, Shridharani held, was a consideration in the position which the Congress Party would take in deciding to accept a coalition government. One commentator, writing in Deccan Herald (September 22), said that if President's rule was "imposed over Andhra with Trivedi as autocratic agent, it would amount to stark extension of North-Indian domination, democracy being shelved, over a region which had formerly shared self-government with the Tamil South."

†For a review of the political developments in Andhra following the formation of the Prakasam Ministry, see Indian Press Digests, Vol. II, No. 7, pp. 114-120. For a summary of the events leading up to the state-wide Andhra elections of 1955, and a detailed analysis of the by-election results, see Margaret W. Fisher and Joan V. Bondurant, The Indian Experience with Democratic Elections, Indian Press Digests Monograph No. 3 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1956), pp. 79-87.

The Telugu-speaking Andhras of the South had succeeded in overcoming the central government's resistance to forming linguistic states. Those who feared that by this step India had reached the turning point in a disintegrative process, as well as those who hoped that the nation was at the threshold of a new era in which popular energies would be released for the building of a democratic India looked to the new state of Andhra to demonstrate whether or not a state was the better for having been organized on a linguistic-cultural basis. But whether for good or for ill, the creation of Andhra made almost inevitable the wholesale reorganization of the states of India.

#### MOVEMENTS FOR OTHER LINGUISTIC STATES

As the struggle for Andhra neared a successful conclusion, struggles in other parts of India for the formation of linguistic states gained impetus. Late in September a Communist editorial in Crossroads held that the formation of Andhra would "inspire the Malayalee, Kannadiga, Tamil, Gujerati, and Maharashtrian people, and give added strength to their struggle for Aikya Kerala, Samyukta Karnataka, Aikya Thamizhagam, Maha Gujerat and Samyukta Maharashtra." Crossroads further suggested that the Andhra people would ". . . carry forward their struggle until they achieved their demand for Vishal Andhra, . . . ."\*

The movement for Vishal Andhra (to include the Telugu-speaking areas of Hyderabad) had been supported by numerous Andhras, long before Andhra State was inaugurated. N. Sanjiva Reddy, President of the Andhra Provincial Congress (who later became Deputy Chief Minister of the state) said in the summer of 1952 that Kurnool had been chosen as the Andhra State capital to enable Andhras to develop contact with Hyderabad and to promote trade and commerce "with the future headquarters" [Hyderabad City] of Vishal Andhra.† Late in September the Andhra Congress Executive appointed a seven-man committee to prepare the case for Vishal Andhra to be presented to the States Reorganisation Commission.§ Meanwhile, the Vishal Andhra Mahasabha intensified a campaign

\*September 27, 1953.

†The Hindu, 1953, August 8, 4:4.

§The Hindustan Times, 1953, October 1, 1:3.

directed towards the achievement of the greater Andhra State.\* This organization touched off a controversy in Hyderabad over the position of the Nizam (the Rajpramukh and former princely ruler of the state) by suggesting that the Nizam might be made Rajpramukh of a Vishal Andhra State.† Those who opposed this suggestion, which was taken to be a move to appease the Muslim population of Hyderabad City, argued that Vishal Andhra would have an area, population and resources as great or greater than any other "Part A" state, and that, therefore, the new state should not be placed in the category of "Part B" states. The new Andhra State was, in the event, made a "Part A" state, and therefore had at its head, a Governor, and not a Rajpramukh. Throughout the several movements for linguistic states in the South, it was clear that the State of Hyderabad occupied a key position. The dismemberment of Hyderabad would be essential if separate Kannada-speaking and Marathi-speaking states were to be created, and if Greater Andhra were to be realized.

The period during which Andhra was created saw significant developments in the movement for a separate Maharashtra. An agreement was reached by leaders of the Marathi-speaking areas of Bombay, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad, meeting in Nagpur. This agreement, which came to be known as the Nagpur Pact, called for the formation of a Marathi-speaking state to include the contiguous Marathi-speaking areas of Bombay, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad, with Bombay City as the capital of the new state. The Pact also provided that the government would move to Nagpur "for a definite period" every year and that at least one session of the state legislature would be held annually in Nagpur in recognition of the "long association" of the people of Mahavidarbha with Nagpur.§

The Nagpur agreement served to intensify the demand by proponents of a separate Mahavidarbha State (to comprise eight

\*According to A. Kaleswara Rao, President of the Vishal Andhra Mahasabha, this organization represented all segments of political opinion in the Telugu-speaking areas excepting Communist. He said at a meeting of workers for Vishal Andhra in Hyderabad on August 31st that Andhra would resist any attempt by the Centre to administer Hyderabad City directly. (The Hindustan Times, 1953, September 3, 9:2.)

†"Hyderabad Newsletter," The Hindustan Times, 1953, September 24, 8:6.

§For further details of this pact, see Indian Press Digests, Vol. II, No. 7, pp. 134-135, or Press Trust of India dispatches for September 28, 1953.

districts of Madhya Pradesh and the Marathi-speaking areas of Hyderabad) in opposition to claims by "Poona-dominated" Maharashtrians. Charges and counter-charges directed towards political leaders in the three states with substantial Marathi-speaking populations appeared with increasing frequency. On October 2nd, 38 members of the Madhya Pradesh State Assembly from Nagpur and Berar, issued a statement expressing their preference for a Mahavidarbha State over a United Maharashtra.\* Charges were repeated that Brijlal Biyani, Finance Minister for Madhya Pradesh was seeking a separate Mahavidarbha State for reasons of personal political ambition.† Several weeks later, the executive committee of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee gave unanimous support to the Nagpur Pact,§ but S. K. Patil, president of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, declared that the Nagpur agreement "laid the axe at the root of democracy."\*\* Meanwhile, a former minister of Madhya Pradesh said that the signature of the president of the Berar Provincial Congress Committee (Dr. Gopalrao Khedkar) to the Nagpur agreement did not prevent the provincial Congress Committee from standing by its resolution favoring Mahavidarbha.††

From the political opposition came a few attempts to find constructive solutions. The executive committee of the Maharashtra Provincial Praja Socialist Party urged that a unanimous all-party plan for the formation of a United Maharashtra be evolved. The Praja Socialist Party Committee expressed the opinion that Bombay should be included in Maharashtra and opposed the views held by S. K. Patil and G. V. Mavlankar as "calculated to prejudice the non-Marathi people of Bombay City against inclusion of the City in Maharashtra."§§

\*The Hindustan Times, 1953, October 3, 8:6.

†In a statement to the press on July 31st Biyani said that he did not seek political power through the formation of Mahavidarbha, and announced that he would continue to work for Mahavidarbha but would retire from political life the day it was formed. (Times of India, 1953, August 1, 9:4.)

§The Hindustan Times, 1953, October 6, 9:5.

\*\*"Madhya Pradesh Newsletter," The Hindustan Times, 1953, October 11, 11:7.

††This was the statement of B. A. Deshmukh as reported in "Madhya Pradesh Newsletter," loc. cit.

§§The Hindustan Times, 1953, October 26, 4:6.



As the chain reaction of linguistic state movements set in throughout the Maharashtra-Gujarat areas, the press was filled with pleas for dispassionate consideration of points of disagreement among the conflicting groups. The Poona-published weekly, The Mahratta, whose editor supported the Nagpur agreement as "undoubtedly a step in advance," expressed concern regarding the extent to which concessions had been offered in order to achieve agreement on United Maharashtra. The editor called upon residents in Mahavidarbha and the Marathi-speaking area of Hyderabad to consider "the repercussions of the conditions that have been incorporated into the Agreement," and expressed fear that the concessions might prompt groups in other areas to ask for special conditions. The Mahratta's correspondent from Bombay (October 6th) pointed out that the issue of linguistic states was very much alive in Bombay, where Marathi dailies were acclaiming the Nagpur Pact, whereas Gujarati dailies had "not been very kind to it."\* The Nagpur-published daily, The Hitavada, challenged the Nagpur Pact as an agreement without authority, and asked if the Pact were "not sufficient to prove that linguism is being forced from the top by a few self-seeking leaders and is not a spontaneous mass movement?"†

In yet other parts of India, the Andhra success had stimulated movements for the reorganization of states on a linguistic-cultural basis. The movement for a separate Karnatak, which had already developed through fasts and organized agitations, was further encouraged by the integration of Bellary District into Mysore.§

\*The Mahratta, 1953, October 9, 1:1.

†The Hitavada, 1953, September 30.

§Following the decision to create a separate Andhra State, the Government of India had appointed Justice Misra to look into the question of the disposition of parts of Bellary District (notably Bellary taluk). On May 20th (1953) the government announced its acceptance of the "Misra award" which recommended that Bellary taluk should become part of Mysore State. The 37-page report by Justice Misra analyzed the viewpoints of both Andhras and Kannadigas. The recommendation was made in view not only of the linguistic composition of the taluk, but also in terms of administrative convenience, financial implications, economic well-being, cultural affinity and historical background of the area. (Reported in the Indian newspapers of May 21st, 1953.) See Indian Press Digests, Vol. II, No. 5, p. 120 and p. 123, and Vol. II, No. 7, pp. 129-130 for the public response to the Misra award.

In the North, the agitation both for and against a Punjabi-speaking state gained in intensity and became a major point at issue in Sikh politics. The Working Committee of the Punjab Provincial Jan Sangh took a strong position against a Punjabi-speaking state. Noting that Punjab had already suffered from partition and would be weakened politically, economically and strategically by any further dislocation, the Committee declared that the Jan Sangh:

- (1) Would resist the formation of a Punjabi-speaking state even if the States Reorganisation Commission authorized it;
- (2) Would oppose the restriction of Punjabi to the Gurmukhi script;
- (3) Would not submit to pressure from the Akali Dal for a Punjabi-speaking State; and
- (4) Would press demands for a Greater Punjab, to be composed of a combined Punjab, PEPSU, and Himachal Pradesh.\*

Meanwhile, Gurmukh Singh Musafir, the president of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, declared that the Akali Sikh position had confused the issue by making the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state a Sikh demand. If a Punjabi-speaking state were to be achieved, he added, it could be only with the willing cooperation of the Hindus of Punjab, cooperation which the Akali leader (Master Tara Singh) could not command.†

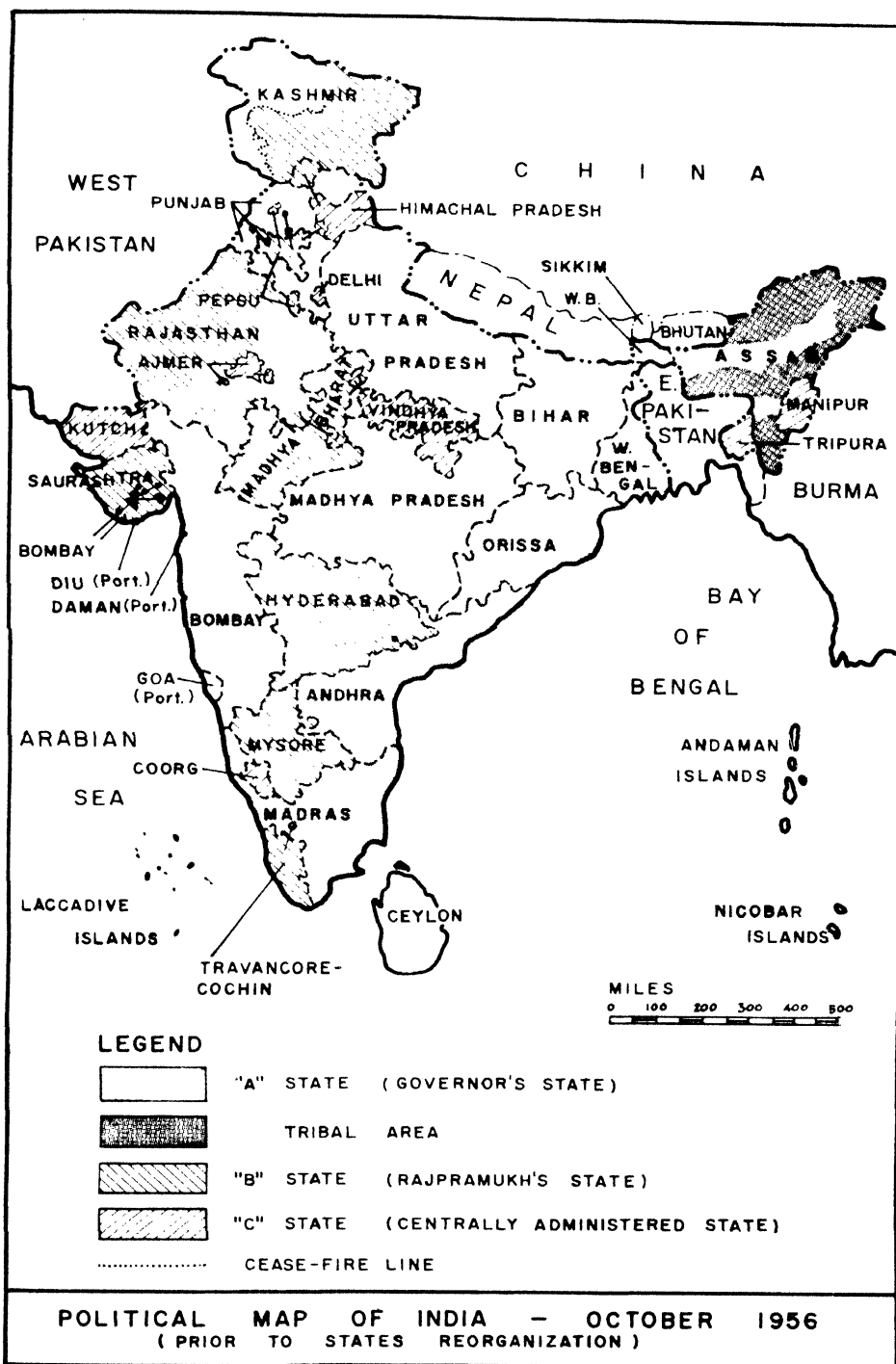
At the same time, demands for redistribution of boundaries on a linguistic-cultural basis were raised even in Orissa (the state which most closely approached the linguistic state ideal) where claims were put forward by Oriya-speaking groups for integration with Orissa of Oriya-speaking areas remaining outside the state.

As demands for the creation of linguistic states multiplied and grew more insistent, the country began to look to the States Reorganisation Commission for solutions "through normal procedure rather than through the kind of extraordinary provocation which led to the steps adopted in the formation of Andhra."‡ No one minimized the difficulties which would face the Commission. As Calcutta's Statesman wrote, "Each separate question is of enormous complexity. Such problems may well

\*The Working Committee met on October 18th (1953) at Jullundur. See especially UPI reports in the newspapers of October 19th.

†The Hindustan Times, 1953, October 14, 9:5.

‡National Herald, 1953, August 2.



drive any linguistic Commission to distraction."\* The Commission set to work early in 1954, and by the time its Report was submitted, on September 30th, 1955, members of the Commission had received over 150,000 documents (of which 2,000 were described as "well-considered memoranda"), had interviewed over 9,000 persons, and had travelled throughout the country covering some 38,000 miles.

#### THE REPORT OF THE STATES REORGANISATION COMMISSION

In their efforts to arrive at judicious recommendations with regard to the reorganization of the political geography of India, the States Reorganisation Commission explained that they had made "every effort to get a complete cross-section of public opinion." Care had been taken, they reported, to see that all those who represent public opinion were heard unless they were themselves averse to expressing any views. The people interviewed included members of political parties, public associations, social workers, journalists, municipal and district board representatives and other people representing cultural, educational, linguistic and local interests. The purpose of the all-India tour was not only to ascertain public opinion but also to make on-the-spot studies at different places and to understand the background of the problem and the popular sentiment on various aspects of reorganisation.†

The Commission's report reviewed the historical background and defined the problem of reorganization of states; it analyzed factors bearing upon reorganization, and made specific proposals together with a statement on the administrative and other implications of such reorganization.

#### The Relationship of the Linguistic State Principle to the Reorganization of States

As the Commission reviewed the arguments for and against the reorganization of states, they made clear that the decision to create the State of Andhra had reinforced the tendency to equate reorganization of India's political units with the formation of linguistic states. Those opposed to the reorganization had, in general, based their case upon the following points:

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\*The Statesman, 1953, August 25.

†Report of the States Reorganisation Commission (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1955), pp. ii-iii.

- (a) there had been no marked change in the situation, internally or externally, which would justify the view that factors which made the consideration of any proposal for the reorganisation of States inadvisable in 1948 and 1952 have now disappeared;
- (b) problems created by the partition, including the complicated problem of Kashmir, had still to be settled;
- (c) the international situation and developments across the borders did not admit of any dissipation of national energies and resources;
- (d) the economic development of the country continued to demand the highest priority; and
- (e) any large-scale changes in the existing set-up were bound to generate provincial feelings and impair national solidarity.\*

The Commission conceded that the case against reorganization was not without substance. Nevertheless, the Commission concluded that "this logic must yield now to the realities of the situation which render further postponement of the question impracticable." The very appointment of the Commission had in itself given rise to certain expectations, and it was essential that uncertainties be removed and that the problem of reorganization be undertaken in terms of "enduring political units." This was imperative, not only to satisfy popular demands, but also to make possible large-scale economic planning. Moreover, the Commission pointed out, "so long as the political parties stand committed to the policy of reorganisation, further deferment of a general reorganisation might lead to more dissatisfaction."

In summing up the charge which had been placed upon its members, the Commission regarded reorganization of states "as a means to an end and not an end in itself." That being the underlying principle, the Commission sought to recommend no change unless it promised to be "a distinct improvement in the existing position," unless the change promoted "the welfare of the people of each constituent unit, as well as the nation as a whole," and unless the advantages were "such as to compensate for the heavy burden on the administrative and financial resources of the country which reorganisation of the existing units must entail."† The Commission further understood that the following objectives were to be kept in view throughout its deliberations:

\*See the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, pp. 22-23.

†Ibid., p. 29.

- (i) preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India;
- (ii) linguistic and cultural homogeneity;
- (iii) financial, economic and administrative considerations; and
- (iv) successful working of the national [Five Year] plan.\*

As the Commission set about the task its members reviewed, elaborated and refined these principles. In the report it was made quite clear that no single principle had been allowed to dominate. As we shall see, however, the Commission was ever mindful that the most articulate opinion in the country expected that India's states would be reorganized along linguistic lines.

#### Unity and Disunity: The Commission's View

By the time the States Reorganisation Commission's Report was made public it was generally agreed that the unity of India should be regarded as the primary factor in redrawing the country's political units. The differences in approach were analyzed by the Commission as arising from "the measure of emphasis put on the relative suitability, in the conditions prevailing in the country, of federal and unitary concepts, not merely as the basic postulates underlying the constitutional structure of India, but as embracing concepts covering the political as well as the social and cultural life of the people." The problem was defined as that of "determining how far the free play of provincial sentiment deriving from a consciousness of cultural and linguistic distinctiveness is a factor making for unity or disunity."

The basic considerations which the Commission took as those which should govern a proper approach to the problem of determining a reorganization aimed at achieving unity in diversity were outlined in some detail:

- (i) an essential feature of our social fabric is undoubtedly a wide variation in our life within the framework of a broadly united culture. This, however, does not mean that diversity is a pre-requisite of unity or that over-emphasis on diversity will not hamper the growth of the national sentiment;
- (ii) in a vast country like ours, governed by a federal Constitution, centrifugal forces are not an unnatural phenomenon, but what is important is not that they should be eliminated, but that such forces must not be allowed to impede the achievement of our national unity; and

\*Ibid., p. 25.

(iii) the strength of the nation is undoubtedly the sum total of the combined strength of the people of the component States. But while the building of contented units, strong enough to bear their share of the burden, is an important objective, it is no less necessary that the links between the units and the nation should be equally strong so that under the stress of regional loyalties, the Union does not fall apart.\*

From these considerations, it appeared to follow that internal adjustments were to be desired, but that, at the same time, it was "imperative to ensure that these do not lead to maladjustments at the inter-state and national level." In the interests of national unity, reorganization had, then, to aim at a two-fold objective:

- (a) firm discouragement of disruptive sentiments such as provincialism or linguistic fanaticism; and
- (b) consistent with national solidarity, provision of full scope for the unhampered growth of the genius of each group of people.†

In examining the role played by language and linguistically based aspirations, the Commission concluded that it was "neither possible nor desirable to reorganise States on the basis of the single test of either language or culture, but that a balanced approach to the whole problem is necessary in the interests of our national unity."§ The Commission summarized its findings with regard to this aspect of reorganization by listing six principles upon which a "balanced approach" might be made:

- (a) to recognise linguistic homogeneity as an important factor conducive to administrative convenience and efficiency but not to consider it as an exclusive and binding principle over-riding all other considerations, administrative, financial or political;
- (b) to ensure that communicational, educational and cultural needs of different language groups, whether resident in predominantly unilingual or composite administrative units are adequately met;
- (c) where satisfactory conditions exist, and the balance of economic, political and administrative considerations favour composite States, to continue them with the necessary safeguards to ensure that all sections enjoy equal rights and opportunities;

\*Ibid., pp. 31-32.

†Ibid., p. 32.

§Ibid., p. 45.

(d) to repudiate the "home land" concept, which negates one of the fundamental principles of the Indian Constitution, namely, equal opportunities and equal rights for all citizens throughout the length and breadth of the Union;

(e) to reject the theory of "one language one state," which is neither justified on grounds of linguistic homogeneity, because there can be more than one State speaking the same language without offending the linguistic principle, nor practicable, since different language groups, including the vast Hindi-speaking population of the Indian Union, cannot always be consolidated to form distinct linguistic units; and

(f) finally, to the extent that the realisation of unilinguism at state level would tend to breed a particularist feeling, to counter-balance that feeling by positive measures calculated to give a deeper content to Indian nationalism; to promote greater inter-play of different regional cultures, and inter-state co-operation and accord; and to reinforce the links between the Centre and the State in order to secure a greater co-ordinated working of national policies and programmes.\*

The Redemarcation of States as Recommended by the Commission

The States Reorganisation Commission reviewed in some detail suggestions other than those made along linguistic-cultural lines for the redrawing of state boundaries. The principle of natural economic regions was considered in several alternative patterns: that arising out of the desire for unified river valley control; that based upon the "nodal" concept wherein areas grouped around important cities and towns or other centers of economic activity would form the basic divisions; and yet another which would divide the country into regions in which the per capita national income would not vary greatly from the national average. In each of these proposals, the Commission found merit, but with each it also found difficulties. When the evidence had been sifted, the Commission recommended a redrawing of India's political geography along lines which more or less coincided with many of the linguistically based demands. Each of the 16 states into which the country was to be divided was dominated by a single language with the important exceptions of the bilingual States of Bombay and Punjab. The units, as recommended by the

\*Ibid., p. 46.



Commission, together with their areas and populations, were to be as follows:\*

	Area (in square miles)	Population (in millions)
Madras	50,170	30.0
Kerala	14,980	13.6
Karnataka†	72,730	19.0
Hyderabad	45,300	11.3
Andhra†	64,950	20.9
Bombay	151,360	40.2
Vidarbha	36,880	7.6
Madhya Pradesh	171,200	26.1
Rajasthan	132,300	16.0
Punjab	58,140	17.2
Uttar Pradesh§	113,410	63.2
Bihar†	66,520	38.5
West Bengal†	34,590	26.5
Assam	89,040	9.7
Orissa	60,140	14.6
Jammu and Kashmir	92,780	4.4

In addition to these 16 states, the Commission recommended that there be three centrally administered territories: Delhi, Manipur and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It was further provided that the residuary part of Hyderabad--Telangana--could join Andhra State if the former State's legislature favored this move by a two-thirds majority after the 1961 elections. The distinctions which had been made

\*As listed in the States Reorganisation Commission's Report, pp. 203-204.

†Figures for these states were approximate.

§One of the two dissenting minutes to the States Reorganisation Commission's Report was that of K. M. Panikkar regarding the redrawing of the boundaries of Uttar Pradesh. Panikkar held the view that a new state should be created consisting of the Meerut, Agra, Rohilkhand and Jhansi Divisions of Uttar Pradesh (minus Dehra Dun District of Meerut Division and Pilibhit District of Rohilkhand Division), the District of Datia from Vindhya Pradesh and the four Districts of Bhind, Morena, Gird (Gwalior) and Shivpuri from Madhya Bharat. He proposed that the new state might have Agra as its capital and might be called the "State of Agra." (See the Report, pp. 244-252.) This proposal to partition Uttar Pradesh was accepted neither by the Commission nor by the government when legislation was drafted to reorganize the states.

between "Part A" and "Part B" states were to be removed, and all "Part C" states (with the exception of Delhi and Manipur) were to be abolished.\*

Among other recommendations was that of retaining central government supervisory power for a specified period over the areas of Himachal Pradesh, Kutch and Tripura. Such extended control was recommended in the interest of advancing the economic development of these backward areas. It is to be noted that one of the two dissenting minutes to the Report was that by the Chairman of the Committee, S. Fazl Ali, on Himachal Pradesh. In his opinion, this "Part C" state should remain under the administration of the Centre, and should not be merged with the Punjab, a move which, he was convinced, would meet with serious popular resistance in the small mountain state.†

As the Commission took up administrative and financial considerations, their underlying concern for promoting a sense of national unity and for countering provincialism was expressed in several recommendations relating to the public services. It was suggested that common Public Service Commissions be established for more than one state, and that 50 per cent of all new entrants to the national civil services (the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service) should be selected from states other than those in which they were to serve. The Commission went on to recommend that additional All-India Services be constituted, including the Indian Service of Engineers, the Indian Forest Service and the Indian Medical and Health Service.§ It was further recommended that a third of the Judges in the several High Courts should be qualified persons from outside the state over which

\*The provisions governing "Part B" and "Part C" states had been considered temporary when the Constitution was drafted. With the removal of the distinctions between "Part A" and "Part B" states, the office of the Rajpramukh--the head of a "Part B" state--would be abolished.

†See the Commission's Report, pp. 238-243. Ultimately, in the reorganizing of the state, Himachal Pradesh was made one of the six centrally-administered states. The others were Delhi, Manipur, Tripura, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Amindive and Minicoy Islands.

§Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, p. 231. "The raison d'être of creating All-India Services," said the Commission, "... is that officers, on whom the brunt of the responsibility for administration will inevitably fall, may develop a wide and all-India outlook." (p. 232)

the respective courts had jurisdiction.\* In a separate chapter, the Commission dealt with the question of safeguards for linguistic groups. As we shall see, this matter was to play an important role in the writing of and in the debate over the States Reorganisation Act.

The Report of the States Reorganisation Commission provided the basis upon which the Government of India set about the redrawing of the country's political geography. The recommendations were not accepted in their entirety, and before the legislation which was to give effect to reorganization of boundaries was finally drafted, Indians were to find themselves embattled over persisting questions of linguistic provincialism. The final chapter in the Commission's Report was entitled "The Unity of India." Its opening paragraph carried advice to which no patriot could take exception: "The problem of reorganisation of States," the Commission commented, "has aroused such passions and the claims which have been made are so many and so conflicting that the background against which this whole problem has to be dealt with may quite often be obscured or even forgotten." In order that the recommendations which had been made might be "viewed in proper perspective," the Commission emphasized the following basic facts:

Firstly, the States, whether they are reorganised or not, are and will continue to be integral parts of a Union which is far and away the more real political entity and the basis of our nationhood. Secondly, the Constitution of India recognises only one citizenship, a common citizenship for the entire Indian people, with equal rights and opportunities throughout the Union.†

With the objective of securing the nation and promoting Indian unity, India's statesmen set about finding the devices whereby provincial passions could be contained, and the problem of conflicting demands resolved. The first to be proposed--and perhaps the most effective--was that of the Zonal Council.

\*Ibid., p. 233.

†Ibid., p. 229.

## THE ZONAL COUNCIL SYSTEM: ITS PROPOSAL AND RECEPTION

### PRIME MINISTER NEHRU INTRODUCES THE PROPOSAL

By the winter of 1955, the agitation for linguistic states had culminated in the decision of the Government of India to undertake the redrawing of state boundaries. The States Reorganisation Commission had made its Report and the Lower House of the Parliament had begun to debate this Report and the many issues which would arise out of widescale reorganization. On December 21st, Prime Minister Nehru intervened in the debate. Concluding an hour-long speech he sprang a "surprise" on the House. The Prime Minister proposed that, following the reorganization of states, India should be divided into four or five larger divisions in each of which could be established an advisory Zonal Council. Such an arrangement, he reasoned, could "develop the habit of co-operative working."

The feeler thrown out by Nehru in the Parliament was met with an enthusiasm far greater than the government had dared to hope. The suggestion of a Zonal Council system was met with "thunderous" applause; it was as though India's legislators, worried over the divisive tendencies in the reorganization of states on a linguistic basis, suddenly saw a means of countering such tendencies, and they seized upon that means in a profound sense of relief and hope. The language Nehru used reflected the delicacy of the linguistic states issue. The more he had thought about it, Nehru told the House, the more he had been "attracted to something" which he used to reject. "I mean," he said, "division of India into four, five or six major groups regardless of language, but always, I will repeat, giving the greatest importance to the language in those areas." He did not want to suppress the regional languages, Nehru again assured the House, and he thought that they should proceed slowly and cautiously "so that people may not suspect undermining of their States' structure." The common council conceived for three, four or five states should initially be an advisory council and the Centre also should be associated with each Council. Later, he suggested, "the advisory zonal councils may develop into something more important."\*

In this initial statement before the Parliament, Nehru emphasized common economic problems as a basis for the zonal divisions. When one Member mentioned a common High Court, the

\*See Indian newspapers for December 22, 1955.

Prime Minister agreed that such a court might be established in some Zones, and that perhaps a common Governor might be introduced. Above all, the Zone was thought of as a means for developing the habit of cooperation and for overcoming the divisiveness inherent in linguistic sectionalism. The central government, Nehru further suggested, could be associated with the Zonal Councils to consider economic problems and "the multitude of border problems and other problems that might arise."\*

When Nehru spoke a few days later in the Upper House of Parliament, concluding the debate on the States Reorganisation Commission Report, he enlarged upon the Zonal Council proposal. He introduced these comments by referring to an earlier preference for small states. His initial approach, he told the House, was in favor of small states "tied up together--a number of States in larger groupings." But the more he had reflected upon it--especially following the publication of the States Reorganisation Commission Report--the more he had come to favor the idea of large states. Encouraged by cheers from the House, Nehru pressed on to urge the Parliament to check "this tendency in India towards too acute a State consciousness which has been encouraged even more by arguments about linguism and the like." He reflected upon the approach Indians had taken in the past, remarking that it used to be "pre-eminently political" while the country was fighting for its freedom. Having achieved that freedom, Nehru continued, "our country's thinking has become much more economic and social than political."

As the Prime Minister advanced arguments for the formation of larger--and fewer--states, he was asked whether he would favor the reduction to only one state. The immediate response came: "That would be ideal," although he quickly added, "But I am not sure that would be ideal in some ways. Anyhow, now it is not a practical proposition."

As Nehru spoke in the Parliament, the concern which he and his government had increasingly felt for the unity of India was made explicit. There was little doubt but that he expressed misgivings which Members on both sides of the House had developed during the long agitation over the linguistic states issue. Statesmen and politicians alike had had to face the realities of the sentiment abroad in the country for reorganization of India's political units. India appeared to have heeded the warning of Sardar Patel that "it will be folly to ignore realities; facts take their revenge if they are not

\*For reports of Nehru's speech before Parliament, see Indian newspapers, 1955, December 25.

faced squarely and well."\* But, having conceded the powerful case for states reorganization, India's public leaders had begun, in Nehru's words, "to feel some pricking of conscience."

Are we going along the right lines, some say so openly. Others may not say but nevertheless feel it. Are we not encouraging disruptive and fissiparous tendencies in India too much?†

The Zonal Council system was the device which Nehru proposed to the Parliament whereby "some kind of common working" could be achieved. Not only could such a system promote cooperation, it might also achieve a "better balancing" between the large states in the North and the smaller states in the South. Whatever decision the Parliament would ultimately take with regard to the pattern of reorganization of states, Nehru urged that the formation of Zonal Councils should be a part of that decision.

When, on January 16th, the Government of India released its communique on the States Reorganisation Commission's Report, several paragraphs were devoted to the establishing of Zonal Councils. The government proposed to establish these Councils "simultaneously with the creation of the new States." At the Zonal level "matters of common concern" were to be dealt with, and these matters were to include "economic planning and questions arising out of reorganisation." The government contemplated, further, the "appointment of common Governors and the establishment of common High Courts and common Public Service Commissions in certain regions."

The demarcation of five Zones put forward in the communique differed in one important particular from that ultimately adopted: the State of Mysore which, in this original proposal was linked with Madras and Kerala to form the Southern Zone, finally was joined with Bombay to constitute the Western Zone.§ The change, as we shall see, followed

\*V. P. Menon closes his Story of the Integration of the Indian States with the injunction that India "would do well to remember" these words of the Sardar. (p. 494)

†Speech in Rajya Sabha, loc. cit.

§The communique noted that the states and areas were to be grouped in the following Zones "for the purpose of establishing Zonal Councils:

1. Northern Zone comprising the existing States of the Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan with such territorial adjustments as may be made.

the stormy controversy over the disposition of Bombay City and the conflict between Maharashtrian and Gujarati sectionalists. The official communique expressed the hope and the intent that Zonal Councils would serve to promote inter-state concord and to "arrest the growth of acute State consciousness." The response to the proposal by the articulate Indian public suggested that such a hope was widespread; in some quarters it was fervently expressed.

#### THE RESPONSE TO THE ZONAL COUNCIL PLAN

"It was as though there was a flash of lightning in the midst of threatening dark clouds."\* Such was the picture one commentator drew of Nehru's proposal to Parliament. The idea which the Prime Minister had thrown out to India's legislators had, indeed, "caught on" as another report expressed it, for there had been a widespread, spontaneous, and favorable response to the Zonal plan. The proposal had "stirred the people's imagination,"† and, as a Hindustan Times commentator suggested, the enthusiasm with which the proposal was met was "born also of the general desire that, whatever may be the basis of the reorganisation, linguistic and other, the unity of the country should be maintained and strengthened."§ Nehru had "made a courageous attempt to rescue the country," editorialized one paper,\*\* and another observer presented his readers with the resounding slogan: "Fight Stateism with Zonalism!" or, he suggested, call it "Panch Mahapradesh

2. Central Zone comprising the Uttar Pradesh and the proposed Madhya Pradesh States;
3. Eastern Zone comprising the proposed States of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam (including NEFA), Manipur--and Tripura;
4. Western Zone comprising the proposed States of Maharashtra and Gujerat and the Centrally-administered area of Bombay; and
5. Southern Zone comprising the States of Andhra and Madras together with the proposed States of Mysore and Kerala and the residuary State of Hyderabad as proposed by the Commission.

\*The Mahratta, 1956, February 3.

†"Insaf" in The Hindustan Times Sunday Magazine, 1955, December 25, 1:8.

§"Week in the Capital," The Hindustan Times, 1955, December 25, 7:3.

\*\*Indian Express, 1955, December 23.

Shila!"\*--a reference to the famous five principles of peaceful coexistence, with panch mahapradesh standing for the five newly proposed Zones.

The proposal which Nehru had presented as a feeler released a spate of comment by public figures and by journalists. Much of this comment revealed the widespread misgivings felt by many Indians about the "passion and prejudice" favoring linguistic states which threatened the unity of the country.† Newspapers used such phrases as "the danger of linguistic fanaticism and narrow regionalism,"§ and "linguistic chauvinism and parochialism."\*\* References were made to the days of Clive and Dupleix when India had "lost her independence through such tendencies overriding feelings of national unity,"†† and the "colossal blunder of the 1906 partition of Bengal" was recalled with the warning that "we are face to face not with one partition but with many."§§ The press turned from an earlier emphasis upon the need to recognize the popular demand for linguistic states to an expression of relief that the Nehru proposal for the creation of Zones had mitigated the dangers inherent in recent developments. "No one can read Mr. Nehru's speech in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday," commented The Statesman, "without thinking that it raised the whole discussion of the S. R. C. report to the level at which it ought to be conducted."\*\*\* Another commentator from Bengal explained that his own earlier opposition to linguistic states "considerably loses force" upon analyzing the prospects of the zonal arrangements which would "more than fulfill the desired national and administrative requirements," and would lead ultimately to "national consolidation."†††

\*"Royjee" in Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1955, December 23, 4:6.

†Indian Express, 1955, December 23.

§The Hitavada, 1955, December 23, 4:2.

\*\*The Hindu, 1955, December 24.

††The Mahratta, 1955, December 30.

§§The Hindustan Times, 1956, February 7, 6:8.

\*\*\*The Statesman, 1955, December 23.

†††"Royjee" in Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1955, December 31, 4:5.



As commentators and public leaders had time to reflect upon the proposal, their observations concerning details of the system, and assessments of its merits and weaknesses became more substantial. In some quarters serious questions were raised about the prospects of zonalization, in others a note of caution was sounded; many suggestions were put forward about the problems with which Zonal Councils might properly be concerned, and other problems which they might expect to face. There were only a few voices raised to condemn the proposal, and these came from the several camps of political opposition.

The opposition was, in fact, slow to respond to Nehru's suggestion. The Praja Socialists, who had been occupied with intra-party dissensions leading to the split-off of the Lohia group of Socialists, adopted a resolution on the question at the meeting of the party's National Executive in February, 1956. This resolution was critical of the proposals as having "not emerged as a result of the wishes of the people but brought forward by the leaders of the ruling party to evade the responsibility of solving the conflicting issues of reorganisation of States on the basis of well-defined principles with due regard for the wishes of the people." The PSP National Executive declared itself "convinced that no such move should be entertained before the people concerned have been given an opportunity to express their wishes freely on these issues." With regard to border disputes, the resolution further urged that they be resolved "democratically only through a plebiscite in the areas concerned."\*

The Communist Party, which had long championed the formation of linguistic states and, capitalizing upon popular discontent, had organized agitation for their formation, criticized the plan for Zonal Councils. During debate in the Andhra Assembly early in April, 1956, P. Sundarayya, leader of the opposition group in the State Assembly and former leader of the Communist group in Parliament, said that Zonal Councils would eventually mean "zonal States" and that they would "bring to nought" the "unity of linguistic States."† Earlier in the year, E. M. S. Namboodripad (who was to become Chief Minister of Kerala) suggested in the party organ, New Age,‡ that Communists would offer limited support to the proposal, but denied the validity of the Zonal system as a counter to linguistic states. There is no conflict between linguistic states and national unity, he argued, and Zonal Councils should not be set up in terms of a false dichotomy. "If he [Nehru] proceeds to implement his zonal council proposal with

\*Reported in The Hindu, 1956, February 14, 6:3.

†Reported in The Hindustan Times, 1956, April 5, 10:8.

‡New Age, 1956, January 1, 4:3.

this idea, then there is the danger that the zonal councils are pitted against the newly formed linguistic States and not made to supplement them."

The position of the Communist Party was made clear in a Minute of dissent by the two Communist members of the Joint Committee on the States Reorganisation Bill (K. K. Basu and J. V. K. Vallabha Rao). The provisions with regard to Zonal Councils in the Bill, they argued, would lead "to the formation of a State above State and ultimately to formation of big multilingual States much to the detriment of national interest." They went on to express agreement about the necessity for inter-state cooperation in economic and social planning, but added that Zones should be "flexible and without any fixed number." The Communist Minute voiced strong opposition to the discussion of boundary disputes and minority problems by Zonal Councils. The Communist members also expressed opposition to the provision in the Bill specifying that decisions of the Zonal Councils were to be taken by majority vote. "This, we suppose, is based on the theory of checks and balances and will lead to unhealthy lobbying among the member States. We feel that the decision should have been taken by concurrence of the interested States."\*

The resistance of the Hindu communalist political parties to the Zonal Council plan lay in their preference for a unitary State. These groups had early opposed linguistic states and though they had been swept along in the general trend, their endorsement of reorganization of states on a linguistic basis had been reluctant. The position of this more orthodox Hindu element was expressed in a joint statement released by two leaders of the Jan Sangh which reiterated the party's advocacy of a unitary form of government and cautiously endorsed the creation of Zonal Councils as a first step towards a unitary form of government.†

For the most part, public discussion of the new plan focused upon such considerations as the general objectives of the system and its advantages, the degree of power and areas of competence to be extended to Zonal Councils, and the possible dangers of weakening the Centre or creating regional separatism.

\*Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, July 16, p. 486.

†The joint statement by U. L. Patil, President of the Maharashtra Pradesh Jan Sangh and M. P. Mahajan, Secretary of the Bombay Pradesh Jan Sangh issued in Dhulia, December 25th, 1955, reported in The Hitavada, 1956, December 28, 3:4.

### Comment on General Objectives and Advantages

Most observers, like most Members of Parliament who spoke on the Zonal proposal during the debate, endorsed the plan as a means for containing the separatist tendencies which had been loosed in the country. It was widely held that the Zonal Councils would serve to soften, if not remove, the feeling of bitterness which had developed. Some commentators suggested that Zonal Councils could aid in the problem of protecting the linguistic minorities remaining in the various states, and almost all hoped that the plan would create a healthy atmosphere, break down the feeling of exclusiveness and promote a cooperative spirit.\* An occasional observer commented upon the motives of the Prime Minister in making the proposal: Nehru was apparently attempting a diversionary tactic, directing attention away from the inflammatory controversy of the States Reorganisation Commission Report, suggested one observer.† Another held that it was too late to reverse a trend which had been gaining strength for decades.§

The possibilities for the development of inter-state cooperation in the field of economic planning was widely noted as one of the most significant functions to be fulfilled by the Zonal Councils. Among the subjects most frequently mentioned as lending themselves to inter-state planning were communications (especially road transport), irrigation and power development. One commentator made special mention of the problem of planning for uniformity of sales tax. References were made to the Second Five Year Plan and the necessity for advancing the Plan through inter-state cooperation.\*\* Another commentator observed that India's extensive river valley projects, often crossing state boundaries, were in various stages of construction. "At such a time," he urged, "we cannot afford to let narrow loyalties to linguistic regions to stand in the way of national development." He saw Zonal Councils as lowering linguistic barriers and promoting inter-state cooperation.†† Yet another observer pointed out that the creation of Councils as advisory bodies was not at all a revolutionary suggestion, and noted that the river

\*See Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1955, December 23.

†Deccan Herald, 1955, December 24.

§Times of India, 1955, December 23.

\*\*Republic Day Supplement, The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 26, 1:1.

††The Hitavada, 1955, December 23, 4:2.

valley projects benefiting more than one state required coordination. This commentator added, "The zonal councils can not only ensure a higher degree of co-operation in the implementation of these and other projects but also in the pooling of experience in other fields."\* In one view, regional grouping with objectives largely economic would mean "only an extension of the present basis of working," for several state governments had already had the experience of collaboration with regard to such projects as the Damodar and Tungabhadra river valley development plans. "This has been possible without the interposition of regional arrangements and under the aegis of the Centre."† In some quarters it was expected that the new arrangement might promote development in more backward areas of the country and that smaller states could place their cases before the Zonal Councils "in a more effective manner."‡

A cautionary comment occasionally was voiced with regard to the functions to be performed by the Zonal Councils. On one extreme, it was suggested that "the emergence of five Zonal Councils as five constitutional fixtures would merely introduce more impediments in settling down to a tolerably working system."\*\* One commentator urged that a careful study be made "of matters which can usefully be dealt with by these councils as otherwise extravagant zonal demands and competition for Central assistance may add to the headaches of the Government of India who might find it more difficult to resist this joint pressure than the demands of individual States."††

#### The Question of the Degree of Power to be Vested in Zonal Councils

Misgivings about the capability of the Zonal bodies to deal with controversial matters such as inter-state border disputes and sharing of river waters through river valley projects led to further questions about the character and extent of the power to be given to the Councils. The advisory nature of the Councils was the subject of comment by several observers. To what extent could these bodies be effective if

\*Times of India, 1955, December 23.

†National Herald, 1955, December 23.

‡The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 4, 9:1.

\*\*Deccan Herald, 1955, December 24.

††Republic Day Supplement, The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 26, 1:1.

they were only advisory?\* The advisory nature of the Councils overcame the difficulty of accommodating them within the existing constitutional framework, one observer pointed out. However, he continued, "considering the scope they have for useful work in co-ordinating economic progress and guiding administration, there can be no doubt that, with the right personnel, they will prove their worth and in due course acquire for themselves a status which can be recognized in the Constitution."†

The statement that the Councils would be advisory in the initial stage was seized upon by several leaders and commentators to press for the gradual extension of power to them. The Chief Minister of Mysore suggested that the proposed Councils be given certain executive authority exercised by the state and central governments, and held that their usefulness would be limited if they were only advisory. He suggested that whereas the central government might frame policies and programs, "much of the responsibility might be entrusted to these Councils which would be in a better position to bring direct supervision, control and guidance to bear upon administrative matters."§ It was held by some that the assurance that the Councils would be advisory in the initial stages "must have been felt by the Prime Minister as absolutely necessary" so as not to deprive the constituent states of their autonomy under the Constitution. One observer went on to say:

There is equally no doubt, judging by the Prime Minister's utterances--however guarded--on the subject, that the Zonal Councils, proposed to be set up as Advisory Councils initially, are nothing but the nuclei of Super-States as Sub-Federal links between the States and the Supra-State, i.e., the Indian Union. It is therefore inevitable that, gradually, most of the powers at present enjoyed by the individual States will be exercised by the Zonal Councils for the common good.\*\*

A few voices of caution were raised. The government was urged to proceed slowly in establishing the Zonal Councils. "The very statesmanlike and advantageous idea of the Zonal Councils and the merger of States is much too likely to be thrown away like a hot potato in the current agitated dominant

\*The Statesman, 1955, December 23.

†Indian Express, 1955, December 23.

§Deccan Herald, 1956, January 1, 1:8.

\*\*"Royjee" in Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1955, December 31, 4:5.

mood of the people at large."\* The Zonal arrangement might be postponed until after the reorganization of states had been effected, wrote another commentator. The Prime Minister had "suggested the coming together of states mainly to enable them to rise above the parochial and language level and secondarily for purposes of consultation and advice.

It might be better to wait for the transfiguration of the economic map of India with more experience of planning and nation-building. The nature and extent of the evils of unilingualism would also be known and the effect of the safeguards for unity which the States Reorganisation Commission has suggested can be measured. The possibilities and the limitations of the Prime Minister's suggestion will then be more obvious than now when the scope of reorganisation is somewhat clouded.†

As the question of extending even legislative and executive powers to the Zonal Councils occupied the attention of observers, one commentator drew attention to their deliberative and advisory character and assumed that they were not intended to "detract from the content of the legislative and executive authority of the States." This writer urged that any notion that Zonal Councils would "amount to the creation of a sub-feudal structure in the Indian Constitution" was "fantastic," and he voiced the opinion that such a development would be "altogether undesirable," a blow to national unity and to the "growth of national patriotism which is the ultimate strength of such unity."§ However, other observers reacted favorably to suggestions for an evolution of increasing power to the Councils. One recommended that modifications in the proposal "should be in the interests of strengthening the powers of the Zonal Councils and not limiting them in favor of State autonomy."\*\*\* Another repeated the case for strong Councils with legislative powers which would make them "effective sub-federal links between the Centre and the numerous constituent States or sub-States." In his view, important subjects of legislation should be placed within the competence of the Councils.††

\*The Mahratta, 1956, February 24.

†National Herald, 1955, December 23.

§Republic Day Supplement, The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 26, 1:1.

\*\*The Hitavada, 1956, June 19.

††"Royjee" in Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 25, 4:5.

Several prominent public figures came out in favor of vesting Zonal Councils with executive powers, and there were a few high level proposals made for the creation of bodies more in the nature of "zonal parliaments" than of advisory councils. It was reported\* that some of the Chief Ministers of states had advocated extension of real power to the Councils to facilitate quick decisions on administrative matters. In the third of a series of three articles on Indian unity,† Mehr Chand Mahajan, former Chief Justice of India, characterized the Zonal Councils as "impotent" so long as they had no effective constitutional or legislative power. The Councils could not, in his opinion, bring about unity in the country if they had only advisory powers. The former Chief Justice suggested that "if these Regional Councils are considered by our leaders to be some solution of the problem and a half-way house between the unitary system of government and the federal constitution," then the only way to make them successful is to give them legislative powers with competence to legislate upon subjects such as those specified in the Constitution as reserved to the states or the states and the Centre concurrently. "Let the Regional Legislative Councils enact laws as the delegates of Parliament on subjects allocated to them." And then the former Chief Justice suggested that there be only five Governors in the whole country, and, "if desirable," only five Ministries and five Public Service Commissions, doing away with the "16 or 18 States now suggested by the S. R. C. Report."

#### A Step Towards a Unitary State?

The question of a unitary State had, in fact, been raised with the Prime Minister by a quick question put to him during his comments on the Zonal Council proposal in the Upper House of Parliament. At that time he had turned aside the question with the remark that "now it is not a practical proposition." Aside from the proposals made by a few individuals--such as that by former Chief Justice Mahajan who suggested the Constitution be amended to form a unitary system--the most vocal of the proponents of a unitary State were spokesmen of the Hindu communal parties. The president of the All-India Jan Sangh (Prem Nath Dogra), addressing the annual conference of the Uttar Pradesh Jan Sangh, outlined the issue as that of a unitary versus a federal form of government. His party took the position that all states should be abolished as political units, a development "essential to set at rest the parochial, sectarian and communal passions that power-hungry politicians

\*Free Press Journal, 1956, January 7, 1:7.

†The Hindu, 1956, February 14, 15 and 16.

have been rousing to gain their selfish ends, unmindful of the danger their actions involve to the unity of the country." He argued that advisory Zonal Councils could not be effective so long as "autonomous and semi-autonomous states" existed.\*

The Central Executive Committee of the R. S. S. S. (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh) adopted a resolution describing a unitary form of government as the "logical conclusion of our national unity" and holding that the proposed advisory councils "would either provide a permanent forum for quarrelling neighbour states or, if they develop strength, would prove dangerous by enhancing the possibilities of revolt against the Centre."† Other representatives of the Hindu communalist parties saw the Zonal Councils as establishing a trend towards a unitary form of government with powers increasingly vested in the Councils in the course of "metamorphosing the Federal form into the Unitary form."§

### Zones and Regional Competition

The fear that the Zonal plan might create regional competition and introduce divisiveness in a new form was expressed by a few observers. Sub-federations, one editorial held, "militate against the unitary conception of India." This commentator saw the Zonal Councils as agencies with little more than coordinating functions.

Such a centre, by all the laws of geo-politics, would be a direct menace to the security of India. When initiating socio-political experiments, we ought not to sacrifice the future good for a present convenience.\*\*

One editorial suggested that a defect of the proposal was the possible result in regionalism wherein "new walls might be erected between one region and another and between one or two regions and the Centre,"†† and another counselled care so that "new seeds of divisions" do not develop among units of the Zones.§§

\*Organiser, 1956, January 9, 5:1.

†Organiser, 1956, January 26, 14:2.

§Organiser, 1956, January 30, 14:1, and The Mahratta, 1956, February 24.

\*\*The Pioneer, 1955, December 23.

††National Herald, 1955, December 23.

§§The Mahratta, 1956, March 30.



The possibility that the Zonal Councils would weaken the power of the Centre was considered by several commentators, whose opinions differed as to the value of such a development. The Chief Minister of Mysore (K. Hanumanthaiya), argued in the Mysore Assembly that Zonal Councils, to function effectively, must be given greater power. He saw over-centralization as a menace and suggested that such functions as Public Works and Posts and Telegraphs be transferred from the Centre to the states with the Zonal Council serving as the supervising agency.\* From the Hindu political party opposition came warnings of the danger of "zone-consciousness" and conflict between the groups of states and the Centre.† This position, in favoring a unitary State, suggested that Zones be created for administrative purposes, but that even advisory bodies should be established by the Centre and not merely "associated" with it.

In Communist quarters alarm was expressed that the Zonal Council system was directed towards weakening the "autonomy of the newly formed linguistic States" and towards "making them virtually powerless."

. . . if this is the direction which the new zonal councils take, then they will become a source of further disruption. What is actually needed is the setting up of such a mechanism as will help the newly formed linguistic States to develop themselves and cooperate among themselves.§

A few other observers saw some danger from the Zonal Councils to the autonomy of the states. An orthodox Hindu leader was of the opinion that "the fact remains that any Council on which the Centre is represented, will be an overlord of the various State legislatures and in actual practice its 'advice' may turn out to be an 'order.'" Such a development would endanger democracy, he continued, by destroying the effectiveness of the elected representatives of the people.\*\* Another observer†† urged a solution which would convert the Zones into large states, thus dividing India into seven units

\*The Hindu, 1956, April 2, 4:2,3.

†Organiser, 1956, January 2.

§Namoodripad, December 29th, 1955, in "Current Comments," New Age, 1956, January 1.

\*\*R. B. Chande, Working President of the Madhya Pradesh Ram Rajya Parishad, as reported in The Hitavada, 1955, December 27, 6:7.

††The Hitavada, 1955, December 28, 4:3.

so that there would be "only seven Governors, seven State Legislatures and seven State Ministries in the country."

Among the most prominent of the suggestions which would endow the Councils with greater powers was that of C. Rajagopalachari, one of India's "elder statesmen," and former Chief Minister of Madras. During debate in the Madras Legislative Council, Rajagopalachari argued that "The Zonal Council should become a parliamentary backed institution." The state legislatures could elect by proportional representation members of the Zonal Councils instead of electing members to individual upper chambers.\*

Rajagopalachari vigorously pressed the case for a Dakshina Pradesh--a large state of the South. He had long opposed the creation of small states, and though he had conceded the case for the creation of a separate Andhra in 1953, he had at that time expressed the view that "we are making a mistake in dividing the country on the basis of language." It was Rajagopalachari who had drafted the resolution on reorganization of states adopted by the Congress Party at the annual session in Hyderabad (January 1953). That resolution emphasized factors other than linguistic homogeneity in the reorganization of states--factors of national unity, national security, economic progress, financial stability of the whole of India and of each state.† Rajagopalachari deplored the decision of the people of the South to ask for "smaller and smaller States," and described the "disintegration" of the South as "Balkanisation." Reflecting the widespread feeling in the South about the power of North India, he commented:

Often have I felt in the course of my public life here that in spite of so many difficulties we have stood up against the heavy weight of the North.‡

And then Rajagopalachari asked what was happening in the South when even the Centre wanted a "big State" and "strangely, it was we," and not the Centre who asked for the breaking up of the South. He then referred to the resolution adopted at the Amritsar Congress\*\* which he saw as a "document of protest" against disintegration, and as supporting union, not division of states in the South. He further urged that the whole of Travancore-Cochin be merged with Madras, and suggested that

\*The Hindu, 1956, April 4, 7:4.

†Indian National Congress Fiftieth Session Resolutions (Hyderabad, 1953, January 17 and 18), p. 8.

‡The Hindu, 1956, April 4, 7:3.

\*\*See p. 92 following.

the formation of Dakshina Pradesh including Mysore could solve the difficulties and disputes of the South.

Rajagopalachari, concluding his review of divisive tendencies, urged that the Zonal Councils be given parliamentary powers. "If the Constitution is altered to that effect," he commented, "we can hope from the Zonal Council that all that has been lost may be recovered."\*

The proposal for Dakshina Pradesh led other observers to see a way in which the South could balance the North in power and prestige. H. D. Rajah, Member of Parliament, pleaded for real powers to be given to what he called "Zonal Parliaments." The states of South India, he explained,

banded into the South Zone could have a Parliament with some 120 or 150 members and it would be a sizable unit which would have equal pull along with the other Zonal Divisions of the country.†

If such an arrangement were not made, he concluded, "then big States like Bombay and Uttar Pradesh would have a greater voice in the affairs of the country compared to States like Madras, Travancore-Cochin and the like which were smaller States from the point of size and population."

It was pointed out by one political analyst‡ that inasmuch as the Madras leadership had resisted "repeated pressure from the High Command for the creation of Dakshina State the zonal schemes may provide the second best alternative."

As the Zonal Council plan approached its final embodiment in the law of the land, comment in general continued to be favorable. There was still much scope for speculation about the best form and the proper functions of the Zonal Councils. However, most of those who criticized found much in the proposal to commend, and even though expectations were often expressed in terms of "second-best" results, hopes ran high that the Zonal system might solve some basic, chronic problems.

\*The Hindu, 1956, April 4, 7:4.

†The Hindu, 1956, January 6, 10:3.

‡"Insaf," The Hindustan Times Sunday Magazine, 1955, December 25, 1:8.

## TRIAL AND ERROR IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MULTI-LINGUAL STATES

The turbulent events which marked the months intervening between the Parliamentary debate on the States Reorganisation Bill in December, 1955 and the following November (1956) when the new demarcation of state and zonal boundaries became effective, illustrate not only the seeming vagaries of politics in India, but also the skill and persistence of India's leaders in pressing the search for solutions to problems of high complexity and profound stress. As we have seen, the complexity of Indian society and the deep attachments to linguistic-cultural groupings had presented enormous problems to those responsible for recommending the direction of change. To no small extent the pattern which finally emerged was the result of imaginative--and also courageous--trial and error.

Committee reports and legislative action were, as could be expected in any democracy, accompanied by vigorous debate and active log-rolling. That they should also have been accompanied by widespread agitation and at times violent conflict was, in the light of the history of the movement for the formation of linguistic states, only to be expected. The observer who would understand the political developments of this period in India's history is obliged to keep ever in mind that legislative and administrative decisions could not be made in the harsh security of dictatorial office: they were made in the difficult atmosphere of conflicting popular pressures, and they were made in an effort to win the approval and the support of democratic constituents. Developments which accompanied each successive announcement with regard to decisions on states reorganization gave pause to government and party leaders alike. Dissatisfaction with the Commission report had at once issued in serious trouble in Bombay where Maharashtrian leaders had aroused popular sentiment in favor of the formation of a separate Maharashtrian state which would include the City of Bombay. Elsewhere in India there was sporadic violence over boundary disputes; separatist tendencies were much in evidence.

In response to these difficulties, there was not only an effort on the part of the government to counter political opposition which could exploit the most explosive issue in post-independence history, but there was also pressure exerted by the Congress Party hierarchy on its members, and a cajoling of provincial leaders by government and party alike. At the same time, there was evidence of give and take, and demonstration of compromise and concession. When the second general elections were held in February and March 1957, not only had the states been reorganized and the constituencies re-delimited, but the network of administrative detail

involving integration of the services and reorganization of offices was also well under way.

Meanwhile, India had witnessed many struggles in many states. Some of them remained to condition and to influence election strategy and election results. The linguistic principle of political organization was central to most of these disturbances. The problem of Bombay State in the West, the rival claims made in the Punjab in the North, and the border disputes between West Bengal and Bihar in the East were among the most troublesome and dangerous developments. In each of these cases a solution was put forward which would involve the establishing of a multi-lingual state. In two of these three cases, the bilingual solution was constitutionally adopted; in the case of West Bengal and Bihar, as we shall see, a much-debated proposal failed.

On January 16th, following upon weeks of deliberation within party and government circles--deliberation which included discussion of the States Reorganisation Commission Report in State Assemblies, debate of the recommendations in Parliament, and many party caucuses and committee meetings--the Home Ministry issued the communique which presented to the country the government's decisions on major questions of reconstituting the states. It will be recalled that it was this communique which set forth the proposed grouping of the states and territories into Zones for the purpose of establishing Zonal Councils.\*

The January 16th communique announced that the government had, in general, accepted the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission. The cases in which the government had departed from those recommendations were, the statement added, those in which it had been found "that the minimum measure of agreement necessary for the efficient working of the administrative units would not be forthcoming on the basis of the Commission's recommendations." With regard to a few "disputed border areas," certain "minor adjustments" had been made "largely by agreement."

#### A SUMMARY OF DECISIONS AFFECTING BOMBAY STATE

The problem which attracted the greatest attention at the time the Home Ministry released its communique was that of the reorganizing of Bombay State. Months were to go by, deliberations to be continued, and violent demonstration to be repeated before a settlement (and then, perhaps only a temporary one) could be reached.

\*See Chapter III, p. 57.

The States Reorganisation Commission had recommended that Bombay State be reconstituted so that it would comprise the major Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking areas of the then existing Bombay State, plus the Marathi-speaking areas of Hyderabad (Marathwada) and the Gujarati-speaking areas of Saurashtra and Kutch.\* In addition, the Commission recommended that a separate Vidarbha State be formed comprising the Marathi-speaking districts of Madhya Pradesh. This decision would have placed the Maharashtrians in a position of some advantage in a reconstituted Bombay State. Maharashtrians would be the predominant linguistic group with a percentage of 75 in Vidarbha, and the majority of the remaining Marathi-speakers would be consolidated within the proposed Bombay State (to include Bombay City) where they would constitute about 48 per cent of the population. The Commission directly rejected the case for a greater Gujarat and, at the same time, conceded that their decision on Bombay would not seem "very satisfactory" to the Gujarati-speaking people. The Commission went on to argue the case for a bilingual Bombay and a separate Vidarbha in terms of financial, historical, developmental, and, finally, national interests.†

Response to the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission was in several quarters sharply critical. Government and Congress Party circles in New Delhi made it clear that if reorganization along the lines recommended by the Commission could not be undertaken with tolerance and good will, the government was prepared to seek another solution. On November 9th the Working Committee of the Congress rejected the bilingual solution and announced a three-state formula whereby a separate Gujarat and Maharashtra would be formed and Bombay City would be constituted a centrally-administered unit. Vidarbha was expected to merge with Maharashtra, but the wishes of the people of that area were to be ascertained.§

The focus of the violent demonstration which followed upon the announcement of the three-state formula and the question which had to be settled through repeated parleys among Congress leaders was that of the disposition of Bombay

\*This recommendation further provided that Abu Road taluk of Banaskantha District, the Karnataka Districts of Dharwar, Bijapur, North Kanara, and the District of Belgaum (except the Chandgad taluk) be separated from Bombay. (States Reorganisation Commission Report, p. 118.)

†Ibid., p. 120.

§Times of India, 1955, November 10, 1:2.

City. Throughout the waning weeks of 1955 and into early 1956, well-organized demonstrations were staged by proponents of Samyukta Maharashtra (United Maharashtra) who demanded the merging of Bombay City in a new Maharashtra State.

When debate opened in Parliament on the States Reorganisation Bill, S. K. Patil, the Congress leader from Bombay (a Maharashtrian who opposed the linguistic principle for states reorganization), pleaded for a trial of the three-state "experiment."\* Patil was cheered; but dissension within the Congress ranks could not easily be dispelled. Opposition to the Working Committee formula was not limited to demonstration in the streets of the City--it colored not only party caucuses but also legislative sessions. In late November over one hundred Maharashtrian Members of the Bombay Legislative Assembly resigned in protest over Chief Minister Morarji Desai's acceptance of the new proposal;† by mid-January, riots in Bombay City had resulted in police firing with considerable bloodshed.

The Home Ministry communique of January 16th, constituting the official position on overall reorganization, included the three-state formula for Bombay. When the Congress Working Committee issued its urgent "Call to the Nation" to accept these decisions with calm and to place national interests above provincial demands, the situation in Bombay was especially noted. It was explained that the Congress sub-committee on reorganization of states had had "numerous consultations with their colleagues from the various parts of Bombay State." As a result of these consultations a number of proposals had been put forward and each one "appeared to have been accepted at the time, but was later rejected." Finally--again in consultation with representatives of the areas concerned--the three-state formula had been adopted. The Working Committee further asserted that no decisions would be made in response to violence. The urgent and primary task of the nation was to curb "disruptive forces" which were "at work in the name of linguistic States, but often with other aims in view."§

\*The Hindustan Times, 1955, December 16, 6:4.

†These Maharashtrian Congressmen were persuaded to withdraw their resignations the following day upon assurances that consideration of the Bill would be postponed. (Free Press Journal, 1955, November 24, 1:6.)

§Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1956, January), pp. 3-6.

As agitation against the Congress government's decision intensified in Bombay, and problems arising out of other linguistically-based claims continued to plague the country, Indian leaders sought solutions on a different level. The Zonal Council proposal was one such instrument through which certain aspects of provincialism might be countered. As we shall see below, yet another proposal was put forward (in January) which aroused some hope that an entirely new approach might be taken to the problems of states reorganization. This was the proposal to establish a bilingual state on India's Northeast frontier by merging Bihar with West Bengal. Government and Congress Party officials looked upon this proposal as pointing the way to the establishment of bilingual states in other parts of the country. The merger plan gave the country some respite from linguistic agitation, for it appeared for a time that the drive towards linguistic provincialism had been arrested by efforts to reorganize along different--regional--lines. Congressmen began to speak of a great Western state which, were it to be established, would clearly remove such thorny problems as the disposition of Bombay City. As we shall see, such a proposal ultimately failed in the Northeast; in Bombay the regional solution could gain little headway in the face of immediate linguistic demands.

During the Spring of 1956, the Congress struggled to attain discipline within the party on policy decisions made with regard to the reorganization of states. Not only in party meetings, but also in state legislatures where the Reorganisation Bill was vigorously debated, the Congress had difficulty in maintaining unity. In Bombay the States Reorganisation Bill was finally approved (April 7th) by the State Assembly, but with numerous Congressmen absent, some 20 Congress Members voting against the Bill, and over 70 abstaining.\* It appeared doubtful that the three-state solution for reconstituting Bombay (even with the additional provision that Bombay City Corporation might be given the option to decide its final disposition after a five-year period) would have enough popular support to prevent continuing agitation and further serious disruption. In mid-May, Nehru was reported to have revived efforts to establish Bombay as a bilingual state. The Prime Minister's reluctance to set a time-limit "even for a 'democratic decision' on the future of Bombay city,"<sup>†</sup> was interpreted as an effort to allow time for the canvassing of support among Members of Parliament from Maharashtra and Gujarat for the establishment of a bilingual state.<sup>†</sup> It was, however, clear that such support

\*The Hindustan Times, 1956, April 8, 6:5.

<sup>†</sup>Times of India, 1956, May 18, 1:1.



had not been garnered in time for the June meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. Addressing that meeting, which was held in Bombay on June 3rd, Nehru asserted that the government would stand by its decision to establish a separate Maharashtra, Gujarat and a centrally-administered Bombay City.\*

The three-state formula for Bombay remained as the official decision through the processing of the States Reorganisation Bill by the Joint Select Committee of Parliament. The Select Committee Report endorsed this solution, although ten dissenting Minutes were appended, five of which opposed the provisions regarding Bombay. Proponents of Samyukta Maharashtra, both within government councils and on the streets of Bombay, made it clear that they were determined to go to great lengths to force the government's hand. Amidst claims of improper procedures by the Prime Minister--and counter claims that the Cabinet had discussed the issue fourteen times before making the decision--the bilingual state solution was once more brought forward. Early in August, 180 Members of Parliament petitioned Nehru urging him to seek the formation of one State of Bombay to include all the Marathi- and Gujarati-speaking areas. It was urged that this was the "only permanent solution."†

It was this solution--a bilingual state comprising Maharashtra (including Vidarbha), Gujarat (including Saurashtra and Kutch), and Bombay City that finally won the day. Concessions had been made to Maharashtrians by including in Bombay the Marathi-speaking areas of Vidarbha, with the result that in the new state Maharashtrians would hold the majority. Home Minister Pandit Pant moved an official amendment to the States Reorganisation Bill (on August 7th) and the amendment carried in the Lower House by 241 votes to 40. In the Upper House the Bill was unanimously passed.§ With this solution the Congress Party was able to regain some party unity and to win back some of its disaffected membership. The Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee unanimously endorsed the plan for a bilingual Bombay on August 30th.

In Gujarat the amended proposal for Bombay had a different reception. For the first time, agitation and demonstration in Gujarat broke into open violence (in Ahmedabad). The new decision was clearly a defeat for Gujarat patriots.

\*Times of India, 1956, June 4, 1:1.

†Times of India, 1956, August 4, 1:1.

§Times of India, 1956, August 26, 1:4.

The Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee endorsed the decision by a vote of 99 to 11, but the party was to suffer some serious set-backs as a result of the new bilingual solution. Indeed, the Congress, as the party responsible for opposing a linguistic solution in the reorganization of Bombay, was to feel the effect in Maharashtra and Gujarat alike. The issue of linguistic provincialism remained alive to dominate the campaigning for the second general elections. In exploiting the Samyukta Maharashtra and the Maha-Gujarat demands, the opposition to the Congress was able to weld a front which weakened the Congress Party throughout Bombay. The boundaries had been changed, and the State of Bombay had been established on a bilingual basis. That this would be the "permanent solution" was still open to serious question. The machinery whereby reorganization could once more be effected remained--and for change there had been much precedent.

If the ties of national unity and party solidarity were to be strained by the more spectacular events in Bombay, they were, at the same time, threatened by developments elsewhere. In the West Bengal-Bihar dispute, where "minor adjustments" had been made "largely by agreement," a crisis was to develop and a solution was to be put forward, the details of which are of interest not only because they illuminate the political problems of the time and place, but also because they illustrate the Indian capacity for experiment and for change. The bilingual solution was, in this instance, unsuccessful; the government was forced, by popular opposition (as evidenced on the one hand by demonstration and, on the other, by the ballot box) to reverse itself.

#### THE WEST BENGAL-BIHAR MERGER PROPOSAL

The proposal to merge the two States of West Bengal and Bihar was presented to the people late in January (1956) in a joint statement made by Dr. B. C. Roy and Dr. S. K. Sinha, the respective Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Bihar. The proposal had received the blessings of the Congress Party's Working Committee, and it was broached as a "significant example of that positive approach to the problem of Indian unity" to which reference had been made in the Working Committee's resolution of November 9th which took "national unity and solidarity" as the "over-riding considerations to be borne in mind in determining the constitutional structure of India."\* The joint statement of the proposed merger was given full support by Prime Minister Nehru who remarked that "at any

\*For the text of the November 9th resolution see Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1955, November), p. 609.

time" the proposal would have been "significant and important," but that "in the present context of things it is of even greater significance and it will no doubt serve to turn people's minds from narrow provincial rivalries to a larger integration and to Indian unity . . ."

### Prelude to the Merger Proposal

The "present context" of which the Prime Minister spoke contained explosive elements readily seized upon by the political opposition to the Congress. The Congress Party itself was far from united in its position. Prominent among the difficulties which characterized the atmosphere of early 1956 were those arising out of border disputes between West Bengal and Bihar, and Congressmen here, as elsewhere, were torn between party and provincial loyalties. Disputes of long standing over border demarcation had been intensified by the partition of Bengal to create East Pakistan, and the partition had brought in its wake an almost overwhelming influx of refugees from East Bengal. The extent of controversy over boundaries and the depth of feeling aroused were suggested by the States Reorganisation Commission, which reported that the redrawing of the West Bengal-Bihar boundaries had been "one of the most difficult problems" with which it had been faced.† It was with especial reference to the West Bengal-Bihar border disputes that the Commission had further noted that "bilingualism" in some areas had to be accepted as "an inevitable fact" and that "no great importance" could, therefore, "be attached to mere linguistic affinity."§

With respect to West Bengal and Bihar, the States Reorganisation Commission held that the distribution of territories as it stood before reorganization was "such as to give rise to some real administrative difficulties from the point of view of West Bengal," and rejected the Bihar government's case which favored the retaining of the status quo. The Commission's Report emphasized the administrative aspect of the situation as "quite apart from" the historical claim of West Bengal and "its psychological aspect."\*\* Finally, the Commission recommended that the whole of the Purulia sub-district of Manbhum District, with the exception of the Chas

\*The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 24, 1:4.

†Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, p. 182.

§Ibid., p. 175.

\*\*Ibid.

thana, and certain territory east of the Mahananda River in the Purnea district of Bihar, be transferred to West Bengal.\*

In West Bengal popular resistance was rapidly developed against the decision (announced by the Home Ministry communique) not to adhere entirely to the States Reorganisation Commission Report with regard to transfer of territories from Bihar. The decision had been to modify the Commission's recommendation by retaining in Bihar some 500 square miles of territory in the Purulia sub-district (Chandil thana and Patamda in the Barabhum thana of Manbhum District in addition to Chas thana). This change was justified on the grounds that the coal reserves and water works of the Tata iron and steel factory at Jamshedpur (Bihar) in this area should not be placed beyond the state boundary. This alteration in the Commission's recommendation was one of those "minor adjustments" made by agreement.

On the evening of January 15th, Dr. B. C. Roy, as Chief Minister of West Bengal, and Atulya Ghosh, as head of the West Bengal Congress Committee, together with the Chief Minister of Bihar (S. K. Sinha) and Bihar's Finance Minister (A. N. Sinha) met in New Delhi with the four-man Congress sub-committee on Reorganisation of States (Prime Minister Nehru, Home Minister Pant, Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and Congress Party President U. N. Dhebar). In reporting later upon this development, Dr. Roy told the press† that the meeting had been friendly, and that no decision had been taken by the central government or the sub-committee of the Congress before his arrival in New Delhi. The decision upon the Bengal transfer of territories from Bihar to West Bengal, announced as part of the Home Ministry communique on

\*Ibid., p. 181. It is to be noted that certain areas in Bihar were populated by a majority of Bengali-speaking residents. There had been a long standing dispute between representatives of these residents and the Bihar government. The complexity of the issues involved is illustrated by the situation which developed in Manbhum as early as 1948 and continued until the greater part of Purulia sub-district was transferred to West Bengal in 1956. To describe the conflict as solely "linguistic" is vastly to oversimplify. This dispute began over the question of the operation of indigenous panchayats in the sub-district, and involved grave economic problems as well. The organization and some aspects of the movement developed by the leaders of Manbhum provide one of the best examples of true Gandhian satyagraha in post-independence India.

†Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 17, 1:1.

the 16th of January, had clearly resulted from agreement achieved during the meeting on the 15th evening: Dr. Roy and Atulya Ghosh had agreed to the retention of the Chandil and Patamda areas in Bihar.

As with other decisions involving boundary and transfer of territories, this decision was unpopular on both sides of the border. In West Bengal protests against the rumored modifications in the Commission's Report had found public expression several days before the decisions were reached.\* The initial protests were not confined to the political opposition. The West Bengal Congress executive committee urged the Chief Minister to lead a deputation to New Delhi to negotiate for the full implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

Those close to the government and the Congress Party in the state welcomed the January 16th communique. They pointed out that West Bengal had been conceded the greater part (over 3,000 square miles) of its claim, including the important link between the northern and southern parts of West Bengal.† The Chief Minister urged acceptance of the Centre's decision which, he said, had granted the "minimum" demands of the state.§ The head of the provincial Congress Committee described the decision as a "fair deal to West Bengal." As later reports from Bihar indicated, Chief Minister Roy's visit to New Delhi had very likely forestalled an even greater reduction in the area to be transferred.\*\*

The opposition lost no time in exploiting the highly volatile Bengali sentiment in favor of transfer of all Bengali-speaking areas to West Bengal. Representatives of virtually all political parties in opposition were quickly welded into a powerful, highly organized joint committee to protest the decision. A general state-wide strike was called for January 21st. The fight against giving up 500 square miles of territory, earmarked for transfer by the States Reorganisation Commission, was led by the West Bengal Linguistic States Reorganisation Committee (a united front of most of the leftist parties of the state) together with the

\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 15, 1:1.

†Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 17, 1:3.

§Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 18, 1:6.

\*\*The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 20, 1:8.

Paschim Banga Rajya Punargathan Sanjukta Parishad\* (which included the Hindu Mahasabha, Jan Sangh, Revolutionary Communist Party of India and certain Bengali cultural groups).†

The protest was couched in clear and unmistakable terms: its case was based directly upon the linguistic principle as the overriding consideration. The movement was in no way directed against the people of any state, the Committee announced, but was a movement against the attempt of the government to frustrate the demand of the people for linguistic states.§ During the protest demonstrations in West Bengal, support was strongly voiced for the Samyukta Maharashtra movement in Bombay State.\*\* Two days before the statewide strike, the joint committee appealed to "all inhabitants of West Bengal" to cooperate in the protest and to support the reorganization of the state on a linguistic basis, "by integrating with it all contiguous Bengali-speaking areas, as repeatedly promised by the Indian National Congress . . . . "†† On the appointed day, shops and markets closed not only in Calcutta but also throughout the major urban centers of the state in what proved to be a relatively peaceful demonstration of protest.§§

From Bihar, also, came disturbing reports of strong opposition to the decision on transfer of territories. The Chief Minister represented Bihar's case in closed-door meetings in New Delhi, and finally sent letters to the Prime Minister and the Congress President seeking permission to order the resignation of his Cabinet on the grounds of inability of his government to accept responsibility for a situation which might develop following upon the proposed transfer of territory. Chief Minister Sinha argued that such

\*The Bengali name of this organization may be translated: West Bengal States Reorganisation Joint Committee.

†Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 21, 1:4.

§Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 18, 5:2.

\*\*Jyoti Basu, leader of the Communist bloc in the West Bengal legislature, made this plea at one of the largest of the public meetings in Calcutta on January 18th. (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 19, 1:3.)

††Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 20, 1:4.

§§Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 22, 1:7.

a transfer would disrupt the economy of the state and lead to widespread popular unrest.\*

That the linguistic issue had popular appeal--wherever the cry had been raised--was undeniable. The history of the movement for linguistic states in the post-independence period reveals a consistent trend of exploitation of the issue for political ends. Prominent among those who manipulated the issue for their own purposes were the Communists. But once the sentiment for linguistic-cultural homogeneity set in, every political party, including the Congress, was forced to take up the cause as its own. Not to have done so would have meant the loss of popular support. No issue could have provided greater stress within the party in power. For Congressmen were also Bengalis, or Biharis, or Maharashtrians, or Gujaratis--it was clear that the responsible leadership could not cease in its efforts to emphasize that Congressmen were first of all Indians.

The action of government leaders with regard to boundary disputes and reorganization of states must be taken in the context of widespread agitation of threats of disaffection. At just the time that violent disturbances in Bombay reached a truly threatening pitch, the situation in Bihar, and especially in West Bengal gave evidence of deteriorating further. Within a week of the announcement by the Home Ministry of the government's decisions on the reorganization, the government in New Delhi was faced with a host of problems, each serious and a few gravely dangerous. It was at this juncture that the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Bihar came forward with the merger proposal.

#### The Merger Proposal Placed before the Congress Working Committee

The major efforts of the Congress Party's Working Committee, as it met in New Delhi on January 22nd and 23rd (1956), were addressed to the problems of states reorganization. As we have seen, the Committee adopted a resolution, the content of which was an urgent plea to the nation to view the disturbances with "the gravest anxiety," and to check "anti-national, reactionary and anti-social forces" which threatened the country with "disruption and disaster." This "Call to the Nation" placed upon Congressmen the primary responsibility for meeting the challenge of the day and for working towards unity and discipline within the party. Congressmen were reminded that their party had "been the strongest force in India in bringing about the integration of

\*The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 19, 1:8.

all parts of this great country."\* In one forceful paragraph the resolution further reminded Congressmen that the party's constitution precluded the resignation of Congress ministers and members of legislatures without the approval of the party's Parliamentary Board or the Working Committee. Calling upon all those involved to withdraw their resignations, the resolution noted that "no Pradesh Congress Committee is competent to demand such resignations and any such action is ultra vires of the Constitution and cannot be approved."

Meanwhile, the Congress leadership had been active in its search for agreements, compromises, and solutions. On the second day of its meeting, the Working Committee was apprised of the merger proposal to be issued by the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Bihar. The Chief Ministers' statement made reference to the "Call to the Nation" resolution, and in an "endeavour to give some content" to that resolution and to counter separatist tendencies, proposed "that the two States should be merged, one with the other, to form one single State."

It was understandable, the statement continued, that the people of Bihar were "dissatisfied because the [government's] decision means the transfer of some territory from Bihar to West Bengal, and, on the other hand, the people of West Bengal feel that their State has not been given enough territory." However, such feelings overlooked the "major fact" that the two states were parts of the Indian Union and "closely allied to each other in many ways." The statement sought a "more permanent solution" in terms of the mutual benefits which economic and administrative cooperation would bring to both states as well as to the "larger interests of the nation."

The merger proposal carried the following conditional statements:

There is no question in this of either State having to submit to any decision imposed upon it, but rather of their own free will they should come to this important decision . . .

While we have made this proposal and expressed our agreement to the merger of the two States of Bihar and West Bengal in full confidence of its acceptance by the people concerned, it is clear that the details of it will have to be carefully worked out, the people concerned will have to be consulted and an atmosphere of voluntary re-union and co-operation has to be created . . .†

\*For the full text of this resolution, see Appendix I.

†For the full text of the proposal, see Appendix II.



### Response to the Merger Proposal

The initial response to the merger proposal was almost as enthusiastic as had been the response to the earlier proposal for the establishment of Zonal Councils. The Working Committee of the Congress was said to have greeted the merger plan with "jubilation."\* Throughout India, with but few exceptions, press comment was enthusiastic. To one observer, the proposal represented "the revolt of reason against the narrow provincialism of the day . . .;"† to another it appeared to be a "bold step in the right direction,"§ and to yet another, "a magnificent gesture" which might "prove to be a concrete example of that positive approach to the problem of States reorganisation which the Congress Working Committee pleaded for."\*\*

The fact that the merger proposal had been drafted "at a time when provincialism was at its height and parochial aberrations bordering on insanity widespread," argued one observer, lent especial significance "to what even in the best of times, would be considered as a very bold and imaginative move." The statement by the two Chief Ministers, according to this commentator, was "destined to go down in history as a remarkable document."††

The West Bengal-Bihar merger proposal attracted many observers not only because it came at a time of grave crisis in India's post-independence history and thereby served "to shock people into sobriety" (as the National Herald commented on January 25th); but also because it pointed the way towards a new and perhaps more lasting solution to the many serious problems of reorganization of states. The merger move was valuable, argued an editorial in The Hindu "precisely because it does not propose to apply the brake after having raised steam." The proposal aimed, rather, "to alter the direction

\*This description was provided by S. K. Patil, President of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, who said the proposal marked the "dawn of a new era in India's history," and who expressed the hope that Maharashtrians and Gujaratis would "not fail to respond to it." (PTI, The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 25, 1:3.)

†The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 25.

§Times of India, 1956, January 25.

\*\*The Hindu, 1956, January 25.

††The Pioneer, 1956, January 25.

of advance."\* This new direction of advance was seen by some as possibly heralding "the unification of India on a zonal, instead of on the pernicious linguistic basis."† One editorial stated that it was necessary that "Zonal States should be formed and the present centripetal forces strengthened," for in "that direction alone lies the highroad to prosperity and national unity."§

As for West Bengal, one Calcutta commentator saw in the merger plan the possibility of the state's being "freed of that psychological complex created by the fact of being the smallest of the Part A States" while at the same time it would open up new opportunities for the Bengali educated middle class and even provide relief from the excessive strain of refugee rehabilitation. The merits of the proposal, this observer concluded, were "so obvious . . . that it will be extremely shortsighted on the part of any political party or group to dismiss it unceremoniously."\*\*

The only group which immediately rejected the proposal was, as could have been expected, the Communist Party. Communist leaders lost no time in attacking the merger proposal. On January 26th, Jyoti Basu and Yogindra Sharma, the respective secretaries of the West Bengal and Bihar Communist Committees, addressed a joint press conference in Calcutta where they labelled the proposal as a "retrograde step" which would spell "disaster to our two peoples." The creation of a bilingual state would, they argued, "turn the integrated State into a cockpit of rivalry and conflicts." They urged that only by redrawing the boundary between West Bengal and Bihar on the linguistic principle could the people of the two states be satisfied. The full force of the Communist argument was focused in an attack upon the principle of multi-lingual states:

Coming in the wake of countrywise movement for linguistic States which has already been crowned with such successes as the creation of the linguistic States of Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Andhra and Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Punjab, etc., this integrated Bengal-Bihar State will mark a definite step backwards and lead to the negation of those achievements and to the restoration of the British-created

\*1956, January 25.

†The Pioneer, 1956, January 25.

§The Hitavada, 1956, January 25.

\*\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 25.

system of artificial multi-lingual States breeding strife and disunity.\*

A few days later, the Politburo of the Communist Party of India was reported to have appealed to the government and to the Congress Working Committee "to adhere to the principle of linguistic States." The "retrograde step" for the merging of West Bengal and Bihar not only meant the "denial of the demand for linguistic States," but it would also "intensify animosities and perpetuate mutual hostility." The Communists predicted that conflict would arise on every issue, "leading to deadlock and giving rise to tension which will poison the whole atmosphere."†

The Communist weekly's correspondent, reporting on developments in the merger proposal and its reception in Calcutta, alleged that the press had been rigged in favor of the merger. Editors and proprietors of newspapers, this reporter claimed, had been repeatedly called to the Secretariat. "As a result most of the Congressite dailies, which had so long been belching fire and thunder demanding even more territories from Bihar than linguistically due to West Bengal, suddenly piped down," he claimed, and began a "concerted campaign for 'careful consideration' of the proposal even though these were just the opposite of what they had been claiming so long."§

That Chief Minister Roy and his colleagues had made repeated attempts to win support for the merger proposal and had also made efforts to attract a favorable press was evident. But the explanation for a substantial and widely enthusiastic support from the press throughout the country must be sought in something more fundamental than last-minute political pressures. Of the daily newspapers analyzed, only one (the Deccan Herald) did not welcome the West Bengal-Bihar merger proposal. This paper, notable for its highly individualistic editorial policy, had previously voiced a word of caution at the time of the Zonal Council proposal. Its major editorial on the West Bengal-Bihar move objected that the Zonal system which had been contemplated as only advisory in nature was now being "displaced by 'merger,' as if such a device would overcome social and psychological problems connected with the past and not coterminous with language . . ." This "spurt of 'zonal merging,'" concluded

\*New Age, 1956, February 5, 16:3.

†New Age, 1956, January 29, 1:5.

§New Age, 1956, February 5, 16:1.

the Deccan Herald, "has come as a racking surprise, and it foreshadows a scene of Sisyphean labours in fresh Constitution-making."\*

Even Blitz, the usually pro-Communist sensational weekly of Bombay, in an article entitled "Reversion to Tribalism," castigated separatist tendencies and hailed the West Bengal-Bihar merger proposal as "a return to sanity."† The acid pen of editor Karanjia suggested in the following issue,§ that there was "every indication that the separatist lust for linguistic division is being transfigured by the holocaust of the preceding weeks into a passion for reintegration." In subsequent weeks, Blitz ran a series of six of the most sober and well-reasoned articles ever to appear in its sensation-splashed pages--articles which put forward the case for multi-lingual states.\*\*

If the Communists were initially isolated in their attack upon the merger proposal, the Hindu communalist parties, on the other extreme, found themselves in the unusual position of embracing with enthusiasm a policy put forward by the party in power. "We have no words to express our joy," wrote Organiser,†† the mouthpiece of Hindu communalist party opinion, with respect to the proposal which marked "perhaps the greatest" day "in our more than seven years of freedom." This editorial found it "significant" that the one party which opposed the proposal was the Communist Party. "The warring bears are out of their sheepskin of co-existence," continued Organiser, "perhaps this is not to be wondered at in professional traitors, whose one aim is to disturb placid waters in the hope of fishing in them when the same are sufficiently troubled."

That the Communists would catch a few fish in those troubled waters could well have been expected. However, the success which they had in marshalling opposition to the merger plan was, as we shall see, sweeping and effective. Meanwhile,

\*1956, January 26.

†1956, January 28, 1:2.

§1956, February 4, 3:1.

\*\*The series began in the February 18, 1956 issue and concluded in the issue of March 24, 1956. The title of this series was "Rediscovery of India," a title suggested, no doubt, by Jawaharlal Nehru's well-known book, Discovery of India.

††1956, January 30.

reaction from other parts of India suggested that the "new trend" might have taken hold.

### Response to the Proposal as it Affected Other States

It was clear that government leaders held the firm hope that a West Bengal-Bihar merger would stimulate similar moves in other states. The merger plan, backed as it was with solid New Delhi support, prompted Congress leaders in Gujarat, Rajasthan and in states of South India to explore possibilities for further integration. It was even suggested that a merger might be effected to include the former Bombay State, Saurashtra and Kutch, Rajasthan, Marathwada (the Marathi-speaking area of the former Hyderabad State) and Vidarbha (Berar). The more cautious commentators conceded that if Maharashtrian leaders rejected the move, at least a merger of Gujarat and Rajasthan could be achieved. There was a "trend," observers in Delhi reported, to form bilingual or multilingual units.\*

Responsible opinion in Bombay and throughout the country had condemned the violence which had swept Bombay following the announcements of earlier decisions. The press indicated considerable early support for the merging of states in the west as an answer to the Bombay problem, and reported that talks between Gujarati and Maharashtrian leaders were expected to be initiated within a few days. The Chief Minister of Bombay as well as prominent Saurashtrian leaders were said to be favorable to the idea of creating Paschim Pradesh (Western Province). In this climate of opinion, a merger in the West could be proposed, as one Bombay editorial put it, without offending any party's susceptibilities. "Bombay city certainly would rejoice at a solution such as Paschim Pradesh with the present bilingual state attached and merged with Vidarbha, Rajasthan, Kutch and Saurashtra."†

Meanwhile, the proposal for the formation of a Dakshina Pradesh (South India province) by merging Madras, Kerala, Karnatak and possibly Andhra§ gained support in prominent circles. According to "a Congress Working Committee source" such a merger was expected, and the Chief Ministers of

\*See reports in the Free Press Journal, 1956, January 26, 1:1, and The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 25, 1:3.

†Times of India, 1956, January 25.

§At this time the matter of uniting the Telangana area of Hyderabad State with Andhra to form a greater Andhra Pradesh was still pending.

Mysore and Travancore-Cochin had expressed themselves in favor of the move.\* The establishment of a Dakshina Pradesh was fully supported by the veteran Congress leader and elder statesman, C. Rajagopalachari, who wired Dr. Roy that the lead given by the West Bengal-Bihar merger proposal had "assured peace and progress to India." "May your great and swift example be followed by Madras, Mysore and Kerala," he said.† Even the Chief Minister of Madras, Kamaraj Nadar, who was reluctant to make any commitment on the matter of Dakshina Pradesh, welcomed the West Bengal-Bihar merger and told the press that he saw no "insuperable difficulties" in arriving at agreed solutions for the uniting of states.§ Madras State's Finance Minister (C. Subramaniam) went much further, in commenting that "it is not too early to consider this idea of bi-lingual or multi-lingual States." He added that the only question was whether bilingual or multi-lingual states should be established "now or some time should be given to the people who have thought on purely linguistic lines, to get accustomed to this idea."\*\*\*

The most influential newspapers in Madras welcomed the West Bengal-Bihar merger proposal. The Hindu suggested that a Southern state "based on the positive consent of the constituent elements" might be a better alternative "than the incongruous and disparate entities which are now in prospect," and took the Communists to task for "kicking up dust over what they seek to represent as the repudiation of the sacred principle of linguistic States . . ."†† Another observer in Madras took the position that were West Bengal and Bihar to consent to have a common government for what was "obviously a single economic region, the linguistic extremists elsewhere may well be shamed into silence."§§ An observer from Central India saw in the merging of states a way of dispelling the fear entertained by South Indians that implementation of the States Reorganisation Commission's Report would result in "consolidation of the Hindi areas of the north and balkanisation of the South." "Now that the idea of big States has gained momentum," this commentator said, "it is to be hoped

\*Reported by PTI (The Hindu, 1956, January 25, 4:6).

†The Hindu, 1956, January 25, 4:5.

§Loc. cit.

\*\*The Hindu, 1956, January 25, 4:5.

††The Hindu, 1956, January 25.

§§Indian Express, 1956, January 24.

that the States in the Deccan peninsula will not let slip this opportunity to merge their identity in big Zonal States."\*

### The Plan for a "United States of West Bengal and Bihar"

The initial enthusiastic response to the merger proposal proved to be short-lived. In the days following the announcement of the merger proposal, the respective state governments attempted to assess, and to influence the popular response. On January 31st, Chief Minister Roy released a statement which carried the general outline which he had in mind for the new state. This outline, he explained, incorporated some of the suggestions which had already been made to him, and he called for the further expression of public opinion.†

It will be recalled that in the original statement of the merger proposal, the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Bihar left open the details of the merger so that "the people concerned" could be consulted and "an atmosphere of voluntary re-union and co-operation" could be created.§ The original plan was, however, conceived in terms of the merging of the two states "one with the other," so as to form "one single State."

The Roy statement of January 31st made it clear that what had initially been conceived as "one single State," was now thought of more as a confederation, with a few unitary features, within, of course, the greater Union of India. The new state was to be called "the United States of West Bengal and Bihar." This statement was couched in language of assurance and reassurance that neither West Bengal nor Bihar was to dominate. Dr. Roy referred to--and apparently accepted--a criticism that the original wording should be changed so that the word "merger," which might connote compulsion or the use of artificial force resulting in a loss of identity, would become "reunion." "Fusion or merger" must come one day, not through "artificial" means--only through a process of "evolution" and democratic processes.

The Roy statement laid down a policy of protecting the predominant languages of the respective former states: both Bengali and Hindi would become official languages for the entire new state, and in border areas the two languages would be equally encouraged. The "internal structure" was to

\*The Hitavada, 1956, January 25.

†For the text of Dr. Roy's outline, see Appendix III.

§See p. 83 above.

continue: "For example, the land system, the tenancy laws, the modes of taxation, the raising of revenue and provision for social services may continue to be distinct in one State as against the other." The area of primary cooperation and unified administration was to be that of economic development. Even here, the interests of the respective regions would be carefully protected.

As set down in the Roy formula, the new state was to have one Governor and one Public Service Commission, one Cabinet and one Legislature. It was suggested that there be a Chief Minister and a Deputy Chief Minister and that by convention these Ministers be chosen alternatively from each of the two regions. The High Courts of West Bengal and Bihar were to be retained with their respective jurisdictions.

Perhaps the most significant of the suggestions put forward in the Roy statement was contained in the description of a device which was later adopted in states where the bilingual solution had been accepted in the overall reorganization. This was the system of intra-state regional councils -- a device for the representation of each region within a state, and a means for safeguarding what were looked upon as special regional interests. The Roy statement provided for these councils as follows:

There might be two Regional Councils, one for each of the major language areas. Each Regional Council will consist of members elected to the Legislature from that particular region. The President of this Council will be a Minister from that region. The special duty of the Council will be to look after the interests of that region in regard to the subjects dealt with by the Council. The subjects will be mainly those of development under the Five-Year Plan, Education, Health and other social services. These Regional Councils will not have any legislative authority. They will advise and make recommendations about the subjects allotted to each Council to the Cabinet or to the State Legislature and by practice and convention their advice will be accepted. In case of conflict between the two regions or between the Councils and the State Cabinet some provisions may be made by appointing an authority to give its final decision on the points at issue.

Dr. Roy's statement was the first official proposal to extend the functions of an intra-state regional council system beyond the safeguarding of language interest and to assign to it broad economic, social service and educational subjects. We shall see below (in Chapter V) how a fully-developed intra-state council system was devised for the States of Bombay, Andhra and the Punjab.



It was this broader scope and function of a unified bilingual state which was especially commended when the Congress Party met in annual session at Amritsar during the second week in February. In a strong appeal to the country to "strengthen the feeling of unity which has recently been menaced by too narrow an advocacy of linguism," the Congress Resolution of Linguistic States observed that

Though the controversy over the reorganisation of States has in some cases been based on arguments which deserve consideration, it has led to conflicts which are largely artificial and which have often been utilized by anti-national elements which seek the disruption and weakening of India.\*

The Congress not only endorsed and welcomed the proposal for a union of West Bengal and Bihar, but went on to emphasize the especial desirability of union to enable the rapid development of the "richest mineral and industrial area in India." "Where this advantage in the sphere of development is indicated because of natural resources, minerals, waterways, the development of electric power, forests, etc., such a union would be desirable." The Congress spelled out the hope for similar moves towards integration of states in other parts of India, moves which were viewed as promising advantages for economic development: "The Congress hopes that this new approach will be made to this complex problem in the South as well as in other parts of India."†

Those who had looked to the West Bengal-Bihar decisions as a "lead to the country" in solving problems which had been created by the linguistic states disturbances took satisfaction in the Congress Resolution. The Congress had seemed to close ranks and, as one editorial commented, the party had taken "certain broad policy decisions at Amritsar which will govern its attitude towards all further questions relating to States reorganisation." This commentator saw in these decisions a strengthening of "centripetal forces." "Administrative convenience and the needs of planned development will now be given the attention they deserve. . . . The Amritsar session has tilted the scales in favour of bilingual States, in which there will be less scope for separatist and fissiparous forces to display themselves. . . ."

\*Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1956, February), p. 53.

†Ibid.

§The Hitavada, 1956, February 14.

As was to have been expected, the Communist Party had maintained the most consistent line and the strictest discipline with regard to this development--as to others--in the movement towards the reorganization of states. The Communists found the Congress resolution alarming. New Age described proposals for merger as "a weapon against the democratic movement," and alleged that the "phrase 'unity of India' was used to camouflage new theories propounded in order to thwart democratic demands and aspirations and enforce reactionary schemes for mergers between States." The Communist statement was reminiscent of earlier applications of the Soviet nationality theory.

. . . the new theories have as their basis the reactionary one of a single Indian nation created out of the suppression of the various nationalities of India. Such proposals would not help to mobilise the peoples of India for the development of the country, for the unity of India can be realised only by the full flowering of all the diverse nationalities that make up that unity.\*

Immediately after the announcement of the proposal, some favorable response had been voiced among non-communist leftist groups. The Bombay Committee of the All-India Forward Bloc had come out with a statement supporting the West Bengal-Bihar merger, describing it as a "lead" in the establishment of "homogeneous States" which would bring about a "classless society and State."† The General Secretary of the Praja Socialist Party, Triloki Singh, also had been reported as commenting that the merger would be a "good move."§ Praja Socialist leaders in West Bengal, however, attacked the proposal. The chairman of the state party, Suresh Chandra Banerjee, was quoted as having remarked that from the "wider national point of view there is nothing to object to [in] the proposal," but he went on to say that "national consciousness" had not yet fully developed. "For the present," Dr. Banerjee held, they should be "satisfied with readjusting State boundaries on strict linguistic principles."\*\* The leader of the Praja Socialists in the West Bengal Assembly characterized the proposal as "suicidal" for West Bengal.†† Later, the Praja

\*New Age, 1956, February 19.

†The Hindustan Times, 1956, January 25, 12:2.

§Ibid.

\*\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 25, 7:1.

††The Hindustan Times, 1956, February 14, 6:3.

Socialist Party joined officially with other opposition groups to oppose the merger. The party's national executive, meeting early in February, adopted a resolution challenging the Congress Party on the policy of merging of states and charged that this policy had "not emerged as a result of the wishes of the people," but had been brought forward "by the leaders of the ruling party to evade the responsibility of solving conflicting issues or reorganization of States on the basis of well-defined principles with due regard for the wishes of the people." The executive committee urged that no move be taken before "the people concerned" had been given an opportunity "to express their wishes freely on the issue."\*

So too, the opinion of Hindu communalist leaders in West Bengal differed from those expressed by other leaders of Hindu communalist groups. The merger proposal, as we have seen, had attracted some Hindu party leaders because it appeared to be a step in the direction of establishing a unitary state. In the view of some of these, the Congress resolution at Amritsar had simply not gone far enough. An editorial in Organiser described as "sickening reading" that part of the Congress resolution which encouraged the formation of "regional councils for each linguistic area" within bilingual states.† Such a position, argued this analyst, "leaves us exactly where we are--with all sorts of people wanting to go in all directions." "Will not this arrangement only help to keep the linguistic embers alive?" he asked, "And what precisely will these councils do? Chew linguistic cud?"§ Meanwhile, the General Secretary of the West Bengal Hindu Mahasabha had issued a statement describing the merger proposal as a "mischievous move to sabotage the demand of West Bengal for return of Bengali-speaking areas,"\*\* and the President of the West Bengal Jan Sangh had repudiated the proposal, and had called for a "Purva-Pradesh" (East Province) conceived in terms of a "comprehensive administrative Division" comprising the entire Eastern part of India with Calcutta as its capital.††

In contrast with Bihar, where the response to the merger was more favorable and where, late in February, the State

\*Janata, 1956, February 19, 3:2.

†Congress Bulletin, loc. cit.

§Organiser, 1956, February 20.

\*\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 26, 9:2.

††Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, January 26, 9:4.

Legislative Assembly overwhelmingly approved the proposal,\* Bengali opposition to a union of the two states was not only vigorous but was also highly organized. Opposition Members in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly united in a solid front against the move. On the day the Governor addressed the two Houses of the State Legislature to open the budget session, opposition Members staged a walkout. In a joint statement, leaders of all opposition groups explained that they had walked out as a mark of protest against the policy of merger.† The West Bengal Linguistic States Reorganisation Committee and the West Bengal States Reorganisation Joint Committee, the two organizations which had led the earlier popular resistance to the government decisions on the West Bengal-Bihar boundary dispute, renewed efforts to stave off this new threat to the linguistic states principle.§

During the three months intervening between the time the merger plan was first put forward and the first week of May when Chief Minister Roy withdrew the proposal, West Bengal was to witness extensive mass demonstration. On February 24th a well-organized hartal in protest of the merger brought business life to a standstill in Calcutta. By the middle of

\*The vote was 157 to 25, with Members of the Jharkhand Party abstaining. The Chief Minister's resolution approving the proposal for the union was opposed by Members of the Praja Socialist Party, Janata Party, and by a few Independents. (The Statesman, 1956, February 26, 1:2.)

†Signatories to the statement included leaders of the Communist, Praja Socialist, Forward Bloc, and National Democratic Parties. (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, February 2, 1:5.)

§The difference between these two organizations was described by Soumendra Nath Tagore, leader of the Revolutionary Community Party, as "fundamental." At a convention of students held in connection with the Mahasammelan of Bengali-speaking people in Calcutta (February 19th) Tagore said that the agitation carried on by the West Bengal Linguistic States Reorganisation Committee was a "negative" one whereas the Joint Committee stood for "something positive" which would not be satisfied with the dropping of the merger proposal. The Joint Committee demand included, he said, the integration of the whole of Manbhum, Dhalbhum, a portion of Santhal Parganas, Goalpara District, Cachar and Tripura with West Bengal. The West Bengal Linguistic States Reorganisation Committee insisted only on the acceptance of the principle of the reorganization of states on a linguistic basis. (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, February 20, 3:4.)

March demonstration against the merger plan had spread to outlying districts.

As the political opposition to the Congress in West Bengal, sparked by the vigorous efforts of the Communists, once more rallied formidable resistance to a solution put forward by the party in power, it became clear that many Bengali Congressmen were not enthusiastic about the merger. The Congress Legislature Party was reported to have agreed conditionally to the proposal as outlined by Dr. Roy. Some members emphasized the need for parity of representation from the two regions in the Upper House of the new state, and others insisted upon the right of either unit to secede unilaterally.\* From the initial suggestion of a merger of states, the plan little by little developed into a union of a very partial character. As the proposal became modified, it appeared that this union was envisaged as having a common Governor, a common Cabinet, and a common Public Service Commission, but that it was to retain two separate legislatures.

It was this partial character of union that attracted the attention of constitutional lawyers. In mid-April the Calcutta High Court dismissed a petition from a Member of the West Bengal Assembly and three others who sought to restrain the West Bengal Government from proceeding with the merger move. Mr. Justice Sinha, in his opinion on the writ petition, observed that the Constitution did not contemplate a partial union of two states. While stating that it would be "entirely premature" to discuss detailed questions of the constitutionality of the merger, Justice Sinha expressed doubt that a union such as that which was envisaged between West Bengal and Bihar could be effected without extensive amendment of the Constitution. The Justice observed that if what was proposed was only to have a common Governor and a common Public Service Commission, that could be done either under the existing provisions of the Constitution or the proposed amendments (provided in the pending Ninth Amendment Bill). It was also possible, he noted, to effect better economic coordination between the two states either through regional councils, or through a joint council composed of the entire membership of the two legislatures--either of which could be set up by the President under Article 263. Under the Constitution, such a council's opinions would have to be purely advisory.†

\*The Statesman, 1956, February 19, 1:1.

†The Hindustan Times, 1956, April 22, 10:6.

As the opposition to union of the two states mounted, and as more and more difficulties emerged with regard to the details of effecting a new united state, Dr. Roy redoubled his efforts to secure support for the proposal. In his moving response to debate on the Governor's address to the opening session of the State Assembly, the Chief Minister had attempted to meet the opposition argument, point by point.\* The focus of that argument, and the focus of his speech, was the principle of division of states upon a linguistic basis. Dr. Roy--like so many others who had been charged with the responsibility of leadership in office--pleaded the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India, as the essential consideration, and laid emphasis upon financial, economic, and administrative factors. "In a developing and dynamic economy," he argued, "other factors than language are of greater importance; demarcation based on language alone may not only not fit in with the physical features of an area but come in the way of a proper exploitation of the resources." To a second major criticism--that the proposal had been put forward without previous consultation with the Legislature of the state or the people--Dr. Roy pointed out that "the proper democratic method" was first to put the proposal into "concrete form" and then to place the formulated proposal "before the people either during the ensuing elections or on any other convenient occasions." Referring to his outline plan of January 31st, Dr. Roy summarized the proposal as a "union of two autonomous linguistic zones for purposes of economic progress and prosperity." He then noted that the Constitution provided that, for the purpose of amalgamation of states, a Bill would have to be framed in the Parliament; he repeated his assurances that no plan would be adopted against the wishes of the people of the two states.

As events rapidly came to a climax through the succeeding weeks, popular response was to be tested not only by demonstration, but also in a strictly constitutional manner. Despite the Chief Minister's struggle to salvage the union plan--a struggle which led him at one juncture to offer to resign if the move were not accepted†--Dr. Roy finally bowed

\*For the full text of this speech, see Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, February 21, 5:3,4,5,6.

†In an address to a discussion meeting in Calcutta, Dr. Roy declared that he believed so deeply in the union proposal that he would advocate it even at the risk of being driven out of the state. Amidst laughter, he added, "I can still practise medicine anywhere I like." (The Statesman, 1956, February 27, 1:2.)

to a decisive verdict on the union proposal by the electorate of an important Calcutta constituency.

### The West Bengal-Bihar Union Proposal Withdrawn

If prolonged popular agitation could not provide an acceptable measure of public opinion on the union proposal, the decisive victory of a candidate in a by-election fought on this issue, could. The death of a well-known Independent (leftist supported) Member of Parliament, Dr. Meghnad Saha, had left vacant a parliamentary seat from the Calcutta North-West constituency. Contesting the by-election to fill this seat was Mohit Moitra whose candidature was supported by all leftist parties. His opponent, Asoke Kumar Sen, was one of the strongest candidates whom the Congress could have selected,\* whereas Mohit Moitra's major political claim to distinction was his service as Secretary of the West Bengal Linguistic States Reorganisation Committee. The issue of the West Bengal-Bihar union proposal dominated all else in an intensive month-long propaganda campaign conducted by the leftist supporters of Moitra. The vote was surprisingly light, though there were some compelling factors to distract from exercise of franchise. (Among these were the oppressive weather and the large number of marriages in the Marwari community due to the auspiciousness of the day according to the Hindu calendar.) When, on the second of May, the results were reported, Independent Moitra had defeated his Congress rival by over 30,000 votes (Moitra polled 84,953 to Sen's 51,880).†

It is to be noted that the late Dr. Saha (who had also contested with the support of leftist parties), had defeated the Congress candidate in this Calcutta constituency during the first general election. The Congress had not, then, lost a seat through the by-election, but had failed to capture it from the leftists. However, in another by-election--held just one week earlier--the Congress had lost a seat (a reserved Scheduled Caste seat) in the Khejri constituency (Midnapore) to a Praja Socialist candidate who had also contested on an anti-merger platform. The results of these elections were interpreted as a direct expression of public opposition to the union proposal. That the issue of the merger of states (and not the matter of personal following) was decisive tended to be borne out by the results of the second general election early in 1957. Once more Moitra opposed Sen in the same constituency. It was not, this time, a straight fight, but

\*Sen was to become (in 1958) Union Minister for Law.

†Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, May 3, 1:7.

the third candidate (of the Jan Sangh Party) polled only 6,000 votes and forfeited his deposit. Congressman Sen defeated Mohit Moitra by a vote of 102,807 to 96,880.\*

On the day the results of the Calcutta contest were announced, Home Minister Pandit Pant said in the Upper House of Parliament that the plan for merging West Bengal and Bihar still held, providing the two states wished to unite. (Dr. Roy had conferred with Pandit Pant just before this statement in the Rajya Sabha.) On the day following the release of the Calcutta by-election results, Dr. Roy announced his decision to withdraw the proposal. This he was doing, he said, "to bow to the opinion of the people." It appeared clear that the people of Calcutta were "not willing to accept a proposal of union such as I had visualized." He added that "one of the democratic methods of obtaining the opinion of the people on such measures, is to see how the people vote in any election in which this proposal forms a major subject at issue." He concluded that, despite his own continuing belief in the objectives upon which the proposal had been based, he and his government could not ignore this verdict.†

The withdrawal of the proposal was received by most of those who commented upon it in the daily press with understanding, yet with regret. The Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Bihar, and especially Dr. Roy, were praised for having made what one editorial (entitled "People's Will") described as "that grand act of affirmation" having a "living worth which must stand the nation in good stead in the years to come." The effort "to bring about the union of the two States," this observer continued, "blew like a whiff of fresh air into an atmosphere sodden with the heat and fumes of regional and linguistic controversies."§ The Amrita Bazar Patrika's correspondent in Patna remarked that the withdrawal of the proposal had "brought out in bold relief the inherent mighty democrat and sturdy realist which go to make up the giant personality of West Bengal's physician premier."\*\*\* Perhaps The Hindustan Times editorial had best summarized the primary reaction of informed opinion. Describing the merger attempt as a "magnificent gamble" which "very nearly came off," the editorial continued:

\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1957, March 27, 1:1.

†Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, May 4, 1:2.

§The Hindustan Times, 1956, May 5.

\*\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, May 6, 1:6.



In retrospect it does seem clear that far too much faith was placed in the swift and sweeping majesty of the master-stroke and far too little recognition given to the necessity of 'educating our masters' which in a democracy is the politician's first diplomacy as well as duty.\*

That Dr. Roy had learned this lesson, and that something had been gained, despite the failure of the proposal, was the hope of many. For those who believed that the country must overcome sectionalism by devising and applying unifying techniques, the attention was now to shift from the multi-lingual state to the institution of the recently accepted Zonal Council. Meanwhile, the problem of adjusting the West Bengal-Bihar boundary had yet to be solved. This, at least, had been made somewhat easier, for the pressures against the government's boundary proposals had found expression--and to that extent had been eased--in the controversy over the merger.

#### The West Bengal-Bihar Transfer of Territories Act

In Bihar the withdrawal of the merger proposal came as a shock. The State Assembly had approved the union of Bihar with West Bengal, and Congressmen, in pressing the advantages of union, had carried major public opinion with them. The withdrawal of the proposal once more focused attention upon the several border issues, and controversy over the boundary was revived by partisans in both states. Nevertheless, as the nationwide debate continued over the reorganization of states, it became clear that the decision with regard to the boundary of West Bengal and Bihar would be based upon that proposed by the government in the January 16th announcement. By that decision West Bengal was to acquire some 3,000 square miles of territory from Bihar, but would not receive another few hundred square miles which had been recommended by the States Reorganisation Committee. In mid-July a Bill for the transfer of these territories was finally introduced into the Lower House of Parliament, and on August 11th a Joint Select Committee made its report on the Bill to the Parliament.

The Joint Committee's report carried thirteen dissenting Minutes, reflecting the continued dissatisfaction of segments of each state with the government decisions. In one of several Minutes of dissent, Jaipal Singh, the leader of tribal groups from the Jharkhand area of Northeastern India, expressed his support for the merger of West Bengal and Bihar, together even with Orissa, to form a strong frontier state.

\*The Hindustan Times, 1956, May 5.

He also urged the consolidation of tribal peoples in a Jharkhand State. Dissenting from the majority recommendation on the joining of the two parts of Bengal through what he described as a "corridor," Jaipal Singh argued that "logic and national interest are thrown to the winds to pander to the menace of Leftist radicalism."<sup>\*</sup>

Four Communist Members of the Committee appended a joint Minute of dissent criticizing the government as having disregarded the linguistic principle in the readjustment of boundaries between the two states. The Communist Members demanded that all Bengali-speaking areas, including the whole of Purulia sub-district of Manbhum, be transferred to West Bengal.<sup>†</sup> Mohit Moitra, whose election to the Parliament on the anti-merger platform made his membership on the Joint Select Committee imperative, dissented also as "an unabashed protagonist of redistribution of States on linguistic basis."<sup>§</sup> Unlike his Communist colleagues, Moitra specified those Bengali-speaking areas which, he claimed, should have been transferred to West Bengal.<sup>\*\*</sup> In his opinion, the government had followed no principle in drafting the Bill, and therefore it could satisfy no one.

That the government had had to adjust many competing claims is, indeed, obvious in a reading of the Act itself. The transfer of territories in Purnea District (somewhat extended by the Joint Committee) had clearly been based upon

<sup>\*</sup>Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, August 11, pp. 686-687.

<sup>†</sup>Ibid., p. 709.

<sup>§</sup>Ibid., p. 697.

<sup>\*\*</sup>These were as follows:

- (a) the whole of Purulia sub-district including Chas, Chandil and Patamda police stations;
- (b) the whole of Dhanbad sub-district including Dhanbad town;
- (c) the whole of Dhalbhum sub-division including Jamshedpur;
- (d) the whole of the eastern portion of the Kishanganj sub-division lying to the east of the Mechi and the Mahananda;
- (e) in Santhal Parganas, the whole of Jamtara and Pakur sub-divisions and the Bengali-speaking areas of Dumka, Rajmahal, Madhupur and Deoghar.

(Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, August 11, p. 700.)

administrative convenience, certain areas in the Purulia sub-district (Chas and Chandil thanas, and Patamda of Barabhum thana) were retained in Bihar by reason of their providing a road link from the Dhanbad coalfields to Jamshedpur, and the transfer of other territories in Manbhum had been determined largely upon a linguistic-cultural basis and in response to the demands vigorously pressed by Bengali-speaking residents of this district.

The recommendations of the Joint Select Committee had a mixed reception. There was, however, some sense of relief on both sides of the border that the dispute was almost at an end. The Bill, as amended by the Joint Select Committee (with only minor changes) passed both Houses of Parliament and on the first of September received the assent of the President. Two months later, when its provisions came into effect, along with the many other changes provided for by the States Reorganisation Act, the transfer of territories went through without incident. In welcoming the people of the transferred areas to West Bengal, Chief Minister Roy urged them to regard West Bengal as their homeland. "This Government," he said, "is going to take active measures for development of the areas concerned, so that the people of these areas might be profitably integrated with the economic life and advancement of the people of West Bengal."\*

There were, during the subsequent days, rejoicing and celebration. Claims based upon the criterion of language were, however, yet to be exploited. Mohit Moitra, whose success in the Calcutta by-election had tipped the scales against the union proposal, announced that "thousands of Bengali-speaking people are still living outside West Bengal." He further promised that "the struggle to bring the outlying contiguous Bengali-speaking areas back to West Bengal will, therefore, continue."† And when the West Bengal leftists drew up their program to fight the second general elections, one of the major planks in the agreed platform was that of "readjustment of the boundaries of the State on the basis of language and contiguity."‡ This plank was the outstanding point of

\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, November 1, 1:6.

†Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, November 1, 5:6.

‡The leftist parties included the Communist Party, PSP, Forward Bloc (Marxist), Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Forward Bloc (Subhasist). (New Age, 1957, January 27, 6:1.)

difference between the Congress and the leftist front.\* However, the linguistic realignment issue had lost some of its political appeal--partly because a few of the most pressing demands had at last truly been met. The reversal of the political fortunes of Mohit Moitra and Asoke Kumar Sen at the hands of the same electorate within one year was some evidence for this interpretation. And in another Calcutta constituency, Dr. Roy managed to squeeze by his Communist opponent in a bitterly fought contest for a Legislative Assembly seat.†

The complexity of the issues and the elusiveness of the maneuvers in these second general elections in West Bengal should not be minimized. It is, however, appropriate to suggest that among the many factors of influence, some weight may be given to a lesson learned by Congressmen through the critical preceding months. This was the lesson which The Hindustan Times commentator had pinpointed in his editorial at the time Dr. Roy had withdrawn the merger proposal: the "first diplomacy as well as duty" of the politician is that of "educating our masters."

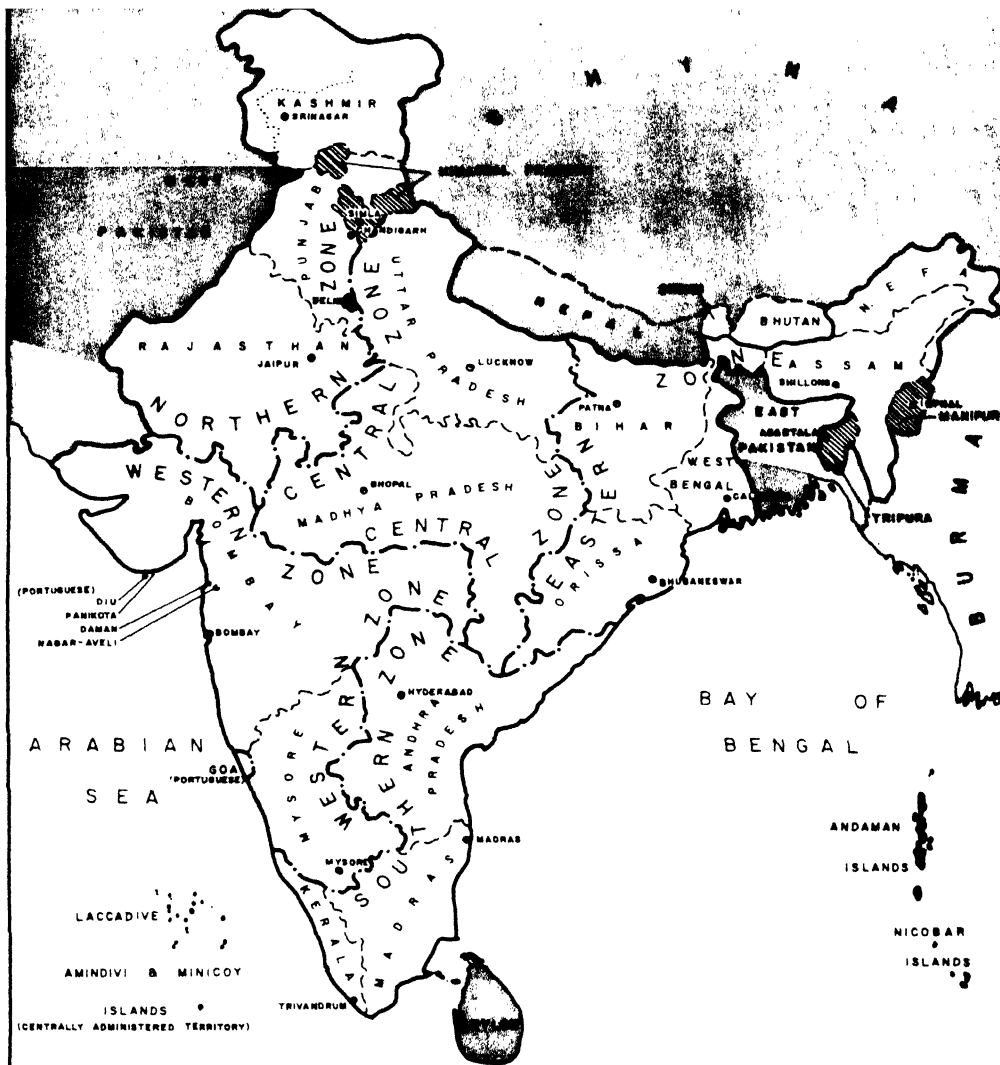
Trial and error over the question of multi-lingual states had been accompanied by continuing stress and tension. The provocation of an irresponsible opposition in exploiting a dangerous issue, the emergent need to restrain disaffection, the temptation to achieve neat and tidy solutions--such were the qualities of that time of crisis when India faced the problem of redrawing her internal political boundaries. In reflecting upon such times one searches for the factors which make possible the survival of democratic forms and processes. No doubt many observers in those days leaned towards a reading of the situation as requiring the emergence of a "strong man." Dr. Roy had many of the qualifications. Yet, he chose to follow democratic procedures, and together with his fellow Congressmen, he pursued the search for solutions within a democratic framework. In the end, Dr. Roy and his colleagues allowed a democratic process to determine the failure of a solution to which he and his party had been seriously

\*The Eastern Economist commented: "It will be difficult for the electorate to choose between the respective 'socialisms.' The only exception is the promise of the Communist-dominated United Left Election Committee to readjust West Bengal's boundaries on the basis of language and contiguity." (1957, February 15, 223:1.)

†Dr. Roy polled 15,550 votes against 15,010 for Mohammad Ismail, a prominent Communist trade union leader. (The Statesman, 1957, March 18, 1:2.)

committed. Perhaps the manner in which this effort failed was the real test of strength.

The history of the merger proposal illustrates a temporary victory for the Communist-led political opposition; it further illustrates the attachment of India's leaders to democratic processes.



#### LEGEND

ZONAL BOUNDARIES — · — · —  
 STATE BOUNDARIES - - - - -  
 CEASE-FIRE LINE · · · · ·  
 CENTRALLY ADMINISTERED TERRITORY [Hatched Box]

MILES  
 0 100 200 300 400

**POLITICAL MAP OF INDIA WITH ZONAL BOUNDARIES - 1956**  
 (SHOWING STATE BOUNDARIES FOLLOWING THE REORGANIZATION OF NOVEMBER 1956)

## THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF ZONAL COUNCILS AND INTRA-STATE ZONAL COMMITTEES

The Zonal Council system was established simultaneously with the creation of the new, reorganized states on November 1st, 1956. The constitutional developments leading to the redrawing of the country's political geography and the introduction of the new Zonal system can be traced by examining the Bills introduced into Parliament, the Joint Committee reports on these Bills, and the final Acts as assented to by the President. Highlights in the reconstitution of the states are represented by the following events. The States Reorganisation Commission released its Report on October 31st, 1955. On April 18th, 1956, two Bills were introduced into the Lok Sabha (the Lower House of Parliament): the Constitution (Ninth Amendment) Bill [later to become the Constitution Seventh Amendment Act], and "a Bill to provide for the reorganisation of the States of India and for matters connected therewith." The Report of the Joint Committee on the States Reorganisation Bill was presented to Parliament on July 16th, 1956 and on the same day the Bihar and West Bengal Transfer of Territories Bill was introduced into the Lok Sabha. On the last day of August, 1956, the States Reorganisation Act received the assent of the President, and on September 1st the President assented to the Bihar and West Bengal Transfer of Territories Act. The Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act received the assent of the President on October 19th, 1956.

With the coming into effect of the new legislation, the constitutional distinction between "Part A," "Part B" and "Part C" states had been removed and two categories for India's component units had been established: "states" and "territories." The number of states had been reduced to 14 and of these, only Bombay and Punjab could be described as basically bilingual. The six territories--Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands--were organized as centrally administered units. The major changes in the reorganization of the states were as follows:

1. the transfer of the Telangana area of Hyderabad to Andhra to form a new, enlarged Andhra Pradesh;
2. the transfer of certain Tamil-speaking areas from Travancore-Cochin to Madras;
3. the forming of the new States of Kerala and Mysore;
4. the merger of Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal with the Mahakoshal area of Madhya Pradesh;
5. the merger of Ajmer and certain areas of Bombay and Madhya Bharat with Rajasthan;
6. the formation of a new Bombay State to include Saurashtra, Kutch, and Marathi-speaking areas of Hyderabad and Madhya Pradesh; and

7. the merger of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) with Punjab.

#### THE DEMARCATION OF THE ZONES

In the course of debate over the constitutional structure of India, questions relating to regionalism as a basis for organization had frequently been raised. By October 1956 it was generally accepted in Congress circles that economic development had to proceed regionally. In a note prepared for the All-India Congress Committee, Manubhai Shah noted that "it is the development of each and every region which will ultimately go to establish a balanced development and also a sense of national satisfaction . . ." It was through the building of "strong bonds of economic inter-dependence between one region and another and between the different regions and the whole country," he asserted, that national strength could be generated.\* The Congress Party had already begun to organize its own constructive work program according to regions. By a decision of the Working Committee taken on March 6th, 1955, the country had been divided into six zones for purposes of organizing constructive work to be carried on by the Congress Party.†

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\*"Economic Aspects of the Implementation of our Development Programmes," Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1956, October-November), pp. 473-492. Portion quoted from p. 485.

†The zones as demarcated by the Congress Party were as follows:

1. North Zone: Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Ajmer, PEPSU;
2. South Zone: Travancore-Cochin, Malayala, Mysore, Tamilnad, Andhra;
3. East Zone: Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Utkal [Orissa];
4. West Zone: Karnatak, Bombay, Gujarat, Maharashtra;
5. Central Zone I: Vindhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Bharat;
6. Central Zone II: Vidarbha, Nagpur, Mahakoshal, Hyderabad.

(Report of the Constructive Work Committee [New Delhi: All-India Congress Committee, 1955], p. 49.)

In a circular letter (August 9th, 1955) the General Secretary of the Party (Shriman Narayan) informed the Pradesh Congress Committees that zonal representatives were to be appointed "to establish a close liaison" between the A.I.C.C. and the Pradesh Congress Committees. For this purpose the division of the country into six zones corresponded with that made for purposes of organizing constructive work. "These



As we have seen, the Zonal Council system was introduced into the constitutional structure of India not only to promote economic development by bringing together into a larger unit states having common problems and potentially competing claims on natural resources, but also as a unifying feature to counter the dangerous political trend toward provincial separatism. In presenting the system to Parliament the positive aspect of its relation to economic planning was stressed. As Home Minister Pant outlined the "Objects and Reasons" for Part III of the States Reorganisation Act which provides for the establishment of Zones and Zonal Councils, he especially noted that the Councils would be advisory bodies, "competent to discuss matters of common interest, particularly in the field of economic and social planning."<sup>\*</sup> The five Zones into which India was to be divided were demarcated as follows:

- (a) the Northern Zone: Punjab, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi, and Himachal Pradesh
- (b) the Central Zone: Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh
- (c) the Eastern Zone: Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Manipur, and Tripura
- (d) the Western Zone: Bombay and Mysore
- (e) the Southern Zone: Andhra Pradesh, Madras, and Kerala.<sup>†</sup>

The decision on the division of the Zones had not been an easy one. It will be recalled that in the initial proposal put forward in the Home Ministry's communique of January 16th, the State of Mysore had been assigned to the Southern Zone. As the decisions were finally made to establish a bilingual Bombay, the Western Zone was redefined to include Mysore.<sup>§</sup>

zonal representatives," Narayan said, "will try to help you in organising Congress work in the various districts. They will try to understand your difficulties and assist you in solving them. They will work in co-operation with the PCCs and draw up their programmes in consultation with them. . . ." (Congress Bulletin [New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1955, August-September], pp. 550-551.)

<sup>\*</sup>Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, April 18, pp. 278-279.

<sup>†</sup>Part III of the States Reorganisation Act, Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 1, 1956, August 31, p. 756.

<sup>§</sup>It will be noted that the most significant difference between the Congress Party's division of the country into six zones for the party's constructive work program and the demarcation later established in the Constitution also lay in the assignment of Mysore to a Western, and not to the Southern Zone.

Some association of Mysore with the Southern Zone was desirable, however, because of geographical and related considerations, and, as we shall see in Chapter VI, an informal arrangement was later agreed upon whereby Mysore could participate in the deliberations of the Southern Zonal Council. Another change from the earlier proposal was that of including Jammu & Kashmir in the Northern Zone. No mention had been made of this disputed state in the January communique.

#### FUNCTIONS OF THE ZONAL COUNCILS

The Zonal Councils were conceived as advisory and deliberative bodies and were established to deal with matters of common concern as between and among the states within each Zone. As the functions of the Councils were spelled out in the statute which created them, each Zonal Council was empowered to:

discuss any matter in which some or all of the States represented in that Council, or the Union and one or more of the States represented in that Council, have a common interest and advise the Central Government and the Government of each State concerned as to the action to be taken on any such matter.\*

Without prejudice to the generality of the above provisions, a Zonal Council might discuss and make recommendations with regard to,

- (a) any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning;
- (b) any matter concerning border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport; and
- (c) any matter connected with, or arising out of, the reorganisation of the States under this Act.†

That linguistic minorities should have been made a concern of Zonal Councils is of especial note. It was clear that reorganization of the states, however strictly it might have been undertaken with regard to linguistic homogeneity, could not solve the problem of linguistic minorities, for minorities were bound to be left within the reorganized units. The States Reorganisation Commission had devoted an entire chapter to the subject of safeguards for linguistic groups, and pointed out that such minorities were protected by the

\*States Reorganisation Act, clause 21, sub-section (1).

†States Reorganisation Act, clause 21, sub-section (2).

Constitution, not alone by the fundamental rights guarantee, but by seven specific Articles as well.\*

The Commission had gone on to examine the case for strengthening these constitutional safeguards. On the one hand, it noted that "overemphasis on the rights of minorities and too many special safeguards for them would tend to keep the minority-consciousness alive and might thereby hamper the growth of a common nationhood."† At the same time, the Commission was impressed "by the need of according to the linguistic minorities sufficient opportunity for development so that they may not suffer from a sense of neglect or discrimination."§ The Commission concluded that the Centre should be made responsible for prescribing policies relating to such matters as the education of minority groups and the use of minority languages for official purposes, and also for the due observance of such policies. It was recommended that the Governor of each state be made the agent of the Centre

\*Article 29 provides that any section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture shall have the right to conserve the same. This Article also prohibits discrimination in the matter of admission to educational institutions maintained or aided by a state.

Article 30 provides that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. This Article further provides that, in giving aid to educational institutions, a state shall not discriminate against the institutions managed by such minorities.

Article 46 is one of the directive principles of state policy providing for the promotion of educational and economic interests of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other "weaker sections of the people."

Article 335 provides for special consideration to be extended to members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in making appointments to government services and posts.

Articles 336-337 contain special provisions with regard to government appointments and educational grants for Anglo-Indians.

Article 347 provides that the President may direct that a language be officially recognized throughout a state (or any part of a state) for such purposes as he may specify, should he be satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population desire that it be so recognized.

†Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, p. 207.

§Ibid., p. 208.

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charged with the responsibility of seeing that minority groups within his state are safeguarded.\*

In June 1956, the All-India Congress Committee accepted the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission with regard to safeguards for linguistic minorities and urged that the following six recommendations proposed by the Commission would "go a long way" in developing "consciousness of partnership in a co-operative welfare enterprise:"

- (i) constitutional recognition of the right of the linguistic minorities to instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage,
- (ii) liberalisation of the facilities now available for education at the secondary stage,
- (iii) recognition of minority languages for prescribed official purposes,
- (iv) abolition of discriminatory requirements as to residence within the States for purposes of recruitment,
- (v) recognition of minority languages as optional media for examinations regulating entry into the public services of the States, and
- (vi) full recognition of free and equal rights regarding trade, business and enjoyment, possession and disposal of land and other interests.†

When the legislation intended to safeguard linguistic minorities was finally drafted, several provisions were added to the guarantees already provided by the Constitution. The Joint Committee on the States Reorganisation Bill had rejected the Commission's recommendation that the Governor act as the agency of the central government in protecting rights of minorities in the states, and had also decided against the establishment of a statutory minorities board to be appointed by the President. The Joint Committee considered that a judicial or quasi-judicial body might accentuate the differences between major and minor language groups and that such a body might also be regarded as an encroachment on the autonomy of the states. As the Bill came out of committee, the original clause regarding the role of Zonal Councils was amended so that not only those matters concerning linguistic minorities which might arise out of the reorganization of the states fell within the purview of a Zonal Council, but any matter affecting linguistic minorities might be brought before

\*Ibid., pp. 214-216.

†Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1956, May-June), pp. 193-194.

a Zonal Council for discussion and recommendation as to action to be taken.

The objection that linguistic minorities could not be adequately protected through the Zonal Councils\* was to some extent met by further provisions written into the Seventh Amendment Act. One of two Articles introduced into the Constitution by the Amending Act charges each state and local authority with the responsibility of "endeavouring" to provide facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage. The second provides for the appointment by the President of a Special Officer for linguistic minorities. This Officer is charged with the duty of investigating all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution and of making reports to the President, such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament and also to be sent to the governments of the states concerned.†

\*For a rigorously argued case for statutory provisions guaranteeing further safeguards for minorities, see the Minute of dissent to the Report of the Joint Committee on the States Reorganisation Bill by Frank Anthony (Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, July 16, pp. 509-516.) See also the dissenting Minute of Bhajahari Mahata to the Joint Committee Report on the Bihar-West Bengal Transfer of Territories Bill for a plea to establish a Board and not to leave the safeguarding of minorities to the Zonal Councils. (Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, August 11, p. 696.)

†These provisions are laid down in Articles 350A and 350B, which read:

350A. It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.

350B. (1) There shall be a Special Officer for linguistic minorities to be appointed by the President.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament, and sent to the Governments of the States concerned.

To what extent grievances arising out of matters regarding linguistic minorities would be taken to the Zonal Councils remained to be seen. The provision for a Special Officer to act as the agency of the central government in such matters would clearly tend to relieve the misgivings of those who had feared that certain minority groups could not obtain a hearing. As Frank Anthony had argued in his dissenting Minute on provisions with regard to minority safeguards in the States Reorganisation Bill, a central agency would be a "salutary check" to the encouragement of "extravagant and impossible demands" on the part of minority communities by their brethren who constituted a majority across state borders. The provision of the Special Officer made less likely the development of a "period of irredentism as between certain States in a Zonal Council."\*

#### COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCILS

According to the constituting Act, each Zonal Council is comprised of the following members:

- a) a Union Minister to be nominated by the President to serve as Chairman for the Zonal Council. [Pandit Pant, the Home Minister, was nominated under this provision];

\*Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, July 16, p. 513.

An illustration of the manner in which the new provisions for safeguarding minorities were to be used is illustrated by the advice given by V. P. Menon, former Secretary to the States Ministry, to the Dakshina Malayalam Minority Conference held at Kuzhithura (Madras) late in November, 1957. Menon told his audience that the safeguards which they had been demanding had been met in essence by the instructions of the central government to the state governments, and "in case of default on the part of the State Government you have got the protection of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities and it is for him and the President of India to redress your grievances." He went on to say:

We have certain rights under the Constitution. These we can seek to enforce, but in your situation--and remember that you are only 25 per cent of the population--it is doubtful policy to go beyond them. You can reasonably ask that schools or classes be provided in proportion to your numbers. That will injure nobody else and will rouse no opposition, but you cannot ask for political safeguards. For that is a thing which arouses opposition and so defeats its own purpose.

(Indian Express, 1956, November 25, 3:3.)

- b) the Chief Minister of each of the States included in the Zone and two other Ministers of each such State to be nominated by the Governor\* (or, in the case of Jammu & Kashmir, to be nominated by the Sadar-i-Riyasat);†
- c) where a centrally-administered territory is included in a Zone, not more than two members from each such territory are to be nominated by the President; and
- d) in the case of the Eastern Zone, the person for the time being holding the office of the Adviser to the Governor of Assam for Tribal Areas.

The Chief Ministers of the states included in each Zone act as Vice-Chairmen of the respective Zonal Councils by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time. Associated with the Zonal Council for each Zone are the following advisers appointed to assist the Council in the performance of its duties:

- a) one person nominated by the Planning Commission;
- b) the Chief Secretary to the Government of each of the States included in the Zone; and
- c) the Development Commissioner or any other officer nominated by the Government of each of the States included in the Zone.

Each adviser is empowered to participate in discussions of the Council or of any committee of which he may be named a member by the Council, but without right to vote. By resolution, each Zonal Council may appoint committees from among its members and advisers for performing such functions as may be specified, and may also associate with any such committee such Ministers either for the Union or for the states and such officers serving either in connection with the affairs of the Union or of the states as may be nominated by the Council. Such associated persons have the right to participate in discussion, but no right to vote.

For each Zonal Council there is also established by law a secretarial staff consisting of a Secretary, a Joint Secretary and such other officers as the Chairman may consider necessary

\*If there is no Council of Ministers, it is provided that three members from that state be nominated by the President. This would be the case were a state to come under the emergency powers of the President.

†The Sadar-i-Riyasat is the head of the government in the State of Jammu & Kashmir with functions roughly parallel to those of the Governors of the other states.

to appoint. The Chief Secretaries of the states represented in each Council are to serve as the Secretary of the Council by rotation and hold office for a period of one year at a time. The Joint Secretary of the Council is chosen from among officers not in the service of any of the states represented in the Council and is appointed by the Chairman.

Each Zonal Council is left free to determine the headquarters for its office providing it is within the Zone served by that Council. Administrative expenses of the Councils are borne by the central government as provided by the Parliament.

#### MEETINGS OF THE COUNCILS

The time of meeting of each Zonal Council is left to the discretion of the Chairman. Rules of procedure in regard to transaction of business are laid down by each Council but must be approved by the central government. The Zonal Council for each Zone meets in the states included in the Zone by rotation unless otherwise determined by the Council. All questions at a meeting of a Zonal Council are to be decided by a majority of votes of the members present and in the case of an equality of votes the Chairman, or, in his absence any other person presiding, has a second or casting vote. The proceedings of every meeting of a Zonal Council must be forwarded to the central government and also to each state government concerned.

Joint meetings of Zonal Councils are also provided for by the Act to allow for the discussion of a matter in which a state in any Zone and one or more states in any other Zone or Zones have a common interest. Councils, meeting jointly, can make recommendations to the state governments concerned as to the action to be taken on the matter under discussion. The central government is empowered to make rules for regulating the procedures to be followed at such joint meetings.\*

#### INTRA-STATE REGIONAL COMMITTEES

The Zonal Councils had been made permanent bodies in an effort to guarantee inter-state cooperation and to promote national unity and development. It remained clear that problems of linguistic minorities would persist, especially in those states which remained--or became--distinctly bilingual. The institution of intra-state regional councils, as we have seen in Chapter IV, was put forward by Dr. B. C. Roy as a means whereby the interests of special regions within a united

\*Clause 22 of the States Reorganisation Act.



state (in that instance, of the proposed West Bengal and Bihar union) could be safeguarded. This suggestion gained support at the Amritsar Congress Session. The Congress resolution on states reorganization noted that it was "desirable to encourage, wherever feasible, the formation of bi-lingual States with regional councils for each linguistic area."\*

When the legislation effecting the reorganization of states was finally drafted, this new institution (called in the statute a Regional Committee, but referred to popularly as a regional council) was established as part of India's constitutional framework. The Seventh Amendment Act replaced the previous Article 371 with a new Article which empowers the President to provide by order for the constitution and functions of Regional Committees of the Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh and the Punjab, and to make modifications in the rules of business of the governments concerned and in the rules of procedure of the Assemblies of those states. This Article further provides that the President may make provision for any special responsibility of the Governor of Andhra Pradesh or of the Punjab in order to secure the proper functioning of the Regional Committees.†

By this same Article, the President was empowered to take certain action with regard to the several regions of the new Bombay State. By order the President may provide for any special responsibility of the Governor for

- (a) the establishment of separate development boards for Vidarbha, Marathwada, the rest of Maharashtra, Saurashtra, Kutch and the rest of Gujarat with the provision that a report on the working of each of these boards will be placed each year before the State Legislative Assembly;
- (b) the equitable allocation of funds for developmental expenditure over the said areas, subject to the requirements of the State as a whole; and
- (c) an equitable arrangement providing adequate facilities for technical education and vocational training, and adequate opportunities for employment in services under the control of the State Government, in respect of all the said areas, subject to the requirements of the State as a whole.‡

\*Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1956, February), p. 53.

†Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 1, 1956, October 19, p. 1044.

‡Loc. cit.

The Governor is presumably entitled to act according to his discretion, but under the supervision of the central government through Presidential Order.

These statutory provisions with regard to Bombay were introduced following the decision to include Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bombay City within one bilingual state and were intended to safeguard the interests of the several regions within the greater state. In the case of the Punjab, the Regional Committee proposal represented the culmination of a different, though similarly stormy, series of events, and in Andhra it solved a serious but less complex problem.

### The Regional Committees in the Punjab

The history of the developments which led to the adoption of the device of the Regional Committee in the Punjab is intertwined with the complex fabric of politics in the Punjab and PEPSU area. It is not our purpose here to explore the intricacies which characterize the turbulent political developments which continue to cause concern in New Delhi and in Chandigarh. It is, however, necessary to outline briefly a few of the highlights of the movement for a Punjabi-speaking state, and to note some of the more significant characteristics of the language problem in this area.

The demand for the formation of a Punjabi-speaking state has been pressed along lines generally put forward in favor of reorganization of states on a linguistic basis. However, there are certain distinctive characteristics of the Punjab-PEPSU demands. The most significant of these is the tendency of the movement for a separate Punjabi-speaking state to become a communal bid for a Sikh state.

The case for a Punjabi-speaking state was argued before the States Reorganisation Commission by the premier organization of the Sikhs, the Shiromani Akali Dal. Among the main arguments urged in favor of the proposal was that it would secure for the country a contented Sikh community.\* As the Commission noted, one curious result of the Sikh agitation had been the repudiation by large sections of the Hindu community of the Punjabi language as their mother tongue. This was a feature peculiar to the demand in the Punjab, for demands in other parts of India for separation from existing composite states had had the backing of an overwhelming majority of the people of the language group seeking such separation. The demand for a Punjabi-speaking state was, on the other hand, vigorously opposed by large sections of persons speaking the

\*See the Commission's Report, pp. 140-141.

Punjabi language and residing in the areas proposed to be constituted into a Punjabi-speaking state.

The States Reorganisation Commission reported that there was no real language problem in the former State of Punjab, for Punjabi and Hindi as spoken in that state are not only akin to one another but are also well understood by all Punjabis. No one argued before the Commission that there was difficulty in communication. The Commission's Report pointed out that although Punjabi was the spoken language of the greater part of the Punjab, Urdu, and not Punjabi, had served as the official language for purposes other than those for which English was used. Shortly before the States Reorganisation Commission made its inquiry, a decision known as the Sachar-Kartar Singh formula had been adopted according to which the state was divided into two language zones, and Punjabi and Hindi were introduced as regional languages for official and educational purposes.

The States Reorganisation Commission concluded that the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state would offer no solution to the language problem, and implied that the linguistic regional arrangements arrived at under the Sachar-Kartar Singh formula would have to be retained.\* The Report cited the view of the earlier Dar Commission that no linguistic state should be imposed upon substantial minorities opposing it, and went on to suggest that a decision favoring the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state might actually result in imposing the wishes of a substantial minority upon the majority.†

As for the former "Part B" State of PEPSU, there was general agreement that in the interests of administrative and economic viability, and for reasons of geographical contiguity, this small state should be merged with the Punjab.

\*The Commission further noted that the problem of language in the Punjab was primarily one of scripts--specifically, the question as to the extent to which the Gurmukhi script should be adopted for the writing of Punjabi instead of the Devanagari script in which Hindi is written. It had been pointed out that even when the Persian script (in which Urdu is written) was used for writing Punjabi, no practical difficulties were experienced. For both Sikh and Hindu communalists, Punjabi (in Gurmukhi script) was taken to be the religious language of the Sikhs, and Hindi the religious language of the Hindus, and this factor, it was argued, had resulted in the separation of Sikhs and Hindus culturally and politically.

†Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, p. 146.

PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) was composed of several "islands" surrounded by Punjab, a situation which had given rise to serious problems of law and order. The Commission's solution for this area was a large integrated unit incorporating not only the former states of Punjab and PEPSU but also the small mountainous border state of Himachal Pradesh. As the decisions were finally made, Himachal Pradesh was kept separate as a centrally administered territory and PEPSU was merged in the Punjab.

It was widely recognized that Sikhs and Hindus had to live together in this part of India. If that important segment of the Sikh community which had carried the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state to the extent of repeated violent demonstration was to be reassured, it was clear that some solution would have to be sought by which their sense of grievance could be allayed. It was out of this understanding that government and Congress Party leaders designed the device of the Regional Committees.

The bilingual solution for the Punjab was secured only after repeated negotiations with the Akali Sikhs, and with careful piloting of the regional proposal through caucus and deliberation with prominent Punjabi leaders representing many different views. The good offices of Prime Minister Nehru contributed to the creating of an atmosphere in which a solution could be found; the firm stand of the Education Minister (the late Maulana Azad) that no concessions could be made through threat of violence, made possible the basis for negotiation; and the determination of Home Minister Pant to make no concession to strictly communal demands prevented deterioration of an already seriously disturbed situation.

When agreement\* was finally reached early in April (1956), the state was declared to be bilingual, and both Punjabi (in Gurmukhi script) and Hindi (in Devanagari script) were to be recognized as official languages. The status quo in regard to the media of instruction was to be retained both in the former Punjab and in the former PEPSU areas of the new state. The Punjab regional language formula (the Sachar-Kartar Singh formula) differed from the arrangement in PEPSU by making it optional for school children in the Punjab to be taught in either of the two regional languages. In PEPSU the Punjabi and Hindi regions were clearly demarcated and instruction was given in the respective languages. By retaining the arrangements as they existed before the merger, the sentiments

\*The agreement as outlined by Home Minister Pant before the Lok Sabha is reported in detail by The Hindustan Times, 1956, April 4, 1:2.

of the Punjabi-speaking Hindus who were opposed to Punjabi as a compulsory medium of instruction had been respected. At the district level and below, the official language would be that of the respective region.

The state government was to establish two separate departments for developing Punjabi and Hindi and the central government agreed to encourage the development of Punjabi "in accordance with and in furtherance of its policy to promote the growth of all regional languages."

The two Regional Committees of the Punjab State Assembly --one for the Punjabi Region and the other for the Hindi Region--were constituted by the President under Article 371 of the Constitution and came into effect on November 4th, 1957.\* Each Regional Committee consists of the State Assembly's Members who represent constituencies in the respective regions.† The Chief Minister and the Speaker of the Assembly are excluded from membership in either Committee.

The Governor is charged by the Presidential Order with securing the proper functioning of the Regional Committees, and every Minister and Deputy Minister has the right to participate in the proceedings of either of the two Committees, though such right does not entitle him to vote at any meeting of the Regional Committee of which he is not a member.

Each Regional Committee is competent to consider the following 14 subjects and has power to pass resolutions

\*The Presidential Order followed the April (1956) agreement. Details of the Order have been taken from the Asian Recorder, 1957, December 22-31, pp. 1812-1813.

†The Hindi Region consists of the Districts of Kangra, Simla, Karnal, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Hissar, Mohindergarh, the Kandaghat and Nalagarh tehsils of Patiala, Ambala District (excluding the Rupar and Chandigarh Assembly constituencies) and Jind and Narwana tehsils of Sangrur District.

The Punjabi Region consists of the Districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Bhatinda, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Kapurthala, the Rupar and Chandigarh Assembly constituencies in Ambala District, Patiala District (excluding Kandaghat and Nalagarh tehsils) and Sangrur District (excluding Jind and Narwana tehsils).

The capital area of Chandigarh does not form part of either of the two Regions; however, the representative from Chandigarh sits in the Regional Committee for the Punjabi Region so long as Chandigarh does not become a full Assembly constituency.

recommending legislative or executive action on such questions providing such action does not involve any financial commitment other than expenditure of a routine and incidental character, and providing that it relates to general questions of policy:

- 1) development and economic planning, within the framework of the general development plans and policies formulated by the state legislature;
- 2) local self-government (the constitutional powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, district boards and other local authorities for the purpose of local self-government or village administration, including panchayats);
- 3) public health and sanitation, local hospitals and dispensaries;
- 4) primary and secondary education;
- 5) agriculture;
- 6) cottage and small-scale industries;
- 7) preservation, protection and improvement of live-stock and prevention of animal diseases, veterinary training and practice;
- 8) pounds and prevention of cattle trespass;
- 9) protection of wild animals and birds;
- 10) fisheries;
- 11) inns and innkeepers;
- 12) markets and fairs;
- 13) co-operative societies; and
- 14) charities and charitable institutions, charitable and religious endowments and religious institutions.\*

The Presidential Order provides that every Bill which is not a money Bill and contains provisions dealing primarily with any one or more of the 14 subjects within the purview of the Regional Committees be referred to the Regional Committee or Committees concerned for consideration and report to the Assembly. If a question arises as to whether or not a Bill is a regional Bill, the question is to be decided by the Governor. A regional Bill passed by the Assembly then goes to the Council (the upper house of the state legislature) which may accept or return the Bill to the Regional Committee or Committees concerned. Similarly, a regional Bill originating in the Council is transmitted to the Assembly which passes it or returns it to the Regional Committee or Committees concerned.

\*The details of the structure and function of the Regional Committees were first presented to the Lok Sabha by Home Minister Pant on April 3rd, 1956, and reported in the newspapers of April 4th. This list was taken from The Hindustan Times, 1956, April 4, 12:2.

The Regional Committee has power to regulate its own procedures and may appoint sub-committees; its sittings are to be held in camera. The state cabinet is expected normally to give effect to the recommendations of a Regional Committee in regard to any legislative or executive action which deals with the subjects within the purview of the Regional Committees. However, if the cabinet is of the opinion that it would not be expedient to give effect to any such recommendation or that the Regional Committee is not competent to make such a recommendation, the matter may then be referred by the Chief Minister to the Governor whose recommendations would be final and binding on the cabinet, and action would then be taken accordingly.

That the merger of Punjab with PEPSU was accepted by the legislatures of both these states was, in itself, an achievement for those who sought the further integration of the states.\* The reassurances with regard to the development of the regional languages and the further provisions in the Constitution safeguarding linguistic minorities were calculated to allay the misgivings of the Sikhs in the new state. As events were to demonstrate, however, the solution failed to satisfy some important and articulate elements in the Punjab.

Difficulties about demarcation of the boundaries of the two regions caused considerable delay in bringing into effect the Regional Committee arrangement. The serious disaffection of large segments of the Sikhs who continued their popular agitation for a Punjabi-speaking state was not permanently relieved even by the master stroke of bringing Akali Dal members en masse into the Congress Party. The Congress emerged from the general elections in the Punjab much strengthened in relation to parties in opposition, but the new elements within the Congress and the conflicting interests in the very matters of regional development and linguistic safeguards threatened the party with disintegration. The concessions made to the Sikhs not only had failed to satisfy the militant Sikh element, but they had stirred prominent Hindu

\*Mahratta held in an editorial of April 13th, 1956 that the most remarkable fact about the States Reorganisation Bill was that the arrangement provided for Punjab and PEPSU had been accepted by the legislatures concerned. "It is really greatly creditable to the patriots of the two merging provinces . . ." this observer commented, "that they should have agreed to the scheme of Regional Committees with a common Legislature, a common Governor and a common Council of Ministers. . . . The linguistic problem has been solved to the satisfaction of the Hindus and the Sikhs."

groups into collective action. Through the summer months of 1956 and on into 1957 the regional formula was attacked by orthodox Hindu political groups. The popular and long-established religious and cultural organization, the Arya Samaj, was drawn into the agitation, and late in May (1956) Arya Samaj leaders announced that a movement would be pursued indefinitely until the following seven demands were met:\*

- 1) one language formula for the entire new state;
- 2) the medium of instruction in educational institutions to be left to the choice of parents;
- 3) no compulsion for the teaching of a second language;
- 4) Hindi to replace English at all levels of administration;
- 5) all government notifications at the district level and below to be bilingual;
- 6) government applications accepted in any language with the reply made in the same language; and
- 7) office records up to the district level to be kept in both scripts.

The President of the Hindu Mahasabha, N. C. Chatterjee, had appended a dissenting Minute to the Report of the Joint Committee on the Ninth (later, the Seventh) Amendment Bill, and his arguments against the regional arrangements in the Punjab represented the substance of the case brought against it.† Chatterjee argued that the creating of two zones within the Punjab was tantamount to conceding a communal demand. Cultural or linguistic arguments, he asserted, were pressed into service "as a cloak for camouflaging the real object which is the division of Punjab on communal lines." There were, he said, important innovations introduced through the Regional Committees arrangement, and these, he feared, "would make serious inroads into the working of the Parliamentary form of Government." He took exception to the President's being empowered to provide for and to specify the functions of Regional Committees. The most serious objection which Chatterjee raised was with regard to the clause which provides that in case of difference of opinion between the Regional Committee and the state legislature, reference would be made to the Governor whose decisions would be final and binding. This not only suggested that the Governor might become involved in controversial issues but, he argued, it virtually meant that the executive would have a veto over the elected

\*The Hindustan Times, 1957, May 31, 5:4.

†For Chatterjee's Minute, see Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, July 16, pp. 590-593.



legislature.\* Chatterjee welcomed any formula which would lead to communal harmony in the Punjab, but he concluded that the regional formula had "created further rift" and "stimulated separatist tendencies." No one was likely to take exception to Chatterjee's conclusion that "no form of reorganisation can be a real substitute for communal harmony." The organization which he represented could not, however, lay claim to promoting such harmony in the months which lay ahead, months during which the Hindu Mahasabha was active in urging Hindus of the Punjab to resist to the end the regional arrangement and to prepare themselves for "making sacrifices" in open defiance of the constitutionally adopted plan.†

The charge that the Akali Sikhs had been presented with a de facto Punjabi state and that the "communal" zones would cause further cleavage between Hindus and Sikhs was countered by reference to the constitutional provisions themselves. It was readily conceded that the decision to demarcate Hindi and Punjabi zones and to recognize Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script and Hindi in the Devanagari script as official languages of the state had been measures intended to allay the fears of the Akali Sikhs. Nevertheless, the general linguistic safeguards introduced by the Seventh Amendment Act applied to the Punjab as they did elsewhere and were identical for both the Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking regions. Moreover, members of the Regional Committees were expected normally to follow the general policy of the political party to which they belonged, and not to act independently, that is to say, along communal lines. The occasion for reference of a dispute to the Governor was expected to arise only if the party in power in the State Assembly were in a minority within a Regional Committee, in which case the majority could create a deadlock.

It was clear that the success of the regional formula and the bilingual solution in the Punjab would largely rest upon the spirit in which those charged with the responsibility for governing chose to work it. When the legislature met in April (1957) there was some hope that the new machinery would function smoothly. The Congress Party was in control of both Committees and it appeared that inter-communal bitterness could be reduced through party efforts to focus upon the

\*Alexandrowicz comments that the binding nature of the Governor's decision is open to doubt. He points out that the Governor cannot bind the state legislature and cannot force his Ministry to accept a decision which would be disapproved by the legislature. (Op. cit., p. 189, note.)

†For comment on the Hindu Mahasabha role, see the editorial in The Hindustan Times, 1956, July 9.

interests of the regions and of the state as a whole. Long-established regional and communal loyalties were not, however, so easily to be contained. Debate in both houses of the new Punjab legislature was dominated by regional considerations. However, the regional formula was by then a part of India's constitutional framework. Concern was expressed in many parts of the country that both communities in the Punjab, and both regions could cooperate in building in this frontier state the unity and strength which would serve not only the people of the Punjab but of the nation as a whole. Together with Bombay, the Punjab was expected to remain one of the country's most serious problem-states.

### The Regional Committee in Andhra Pradesh

The movement for bringing together under one state administration the Telugu-speaking peoples of the South gained momentum once the separate State of Andhra had been created from the predominantly Telugu-speaking areas of the former State of Madras. The States Reorganisation Commission had, however, recommended that the Telugu-speaking area of Hyderabad, i.e., Telangana, be constituted as a separate state and that the question of merging Telangana with Andhra be put to the legislatures of both Andhra and Telangana after a period of five years, at which time the merger would be effected if favored by a two-thirds majority of both legislatures.

Late in February (1956) when the Home Minister summoned Andhra and Hyderabad leaders to New Delhi to discuss the future structure of an Andhra state, the recommendation made by the States Reorganisation Commission that a separate Telangana state be formed had virtually been abandoned. The prevailing sentiment was clearly in favor of the immediate formation of a greater Andhra. It was by way of reassuring the leaders of the former Hyderabad region, some of whom still urged the creation of a separate Telangana, that Home Minister Pant put forward the proposal for a Regional Committee to safeguard the economic advancement of Telangana within the new Andhra Pradesh.\*

The details of the regional safeguards and the structure of the Regional Committee were agreed upon in mid-July following the Report of the Joint Committee on the States Reorganisation Bill,† and in August the terms of that agreement were released officially to members of the Andhra

\*The Hindustan Times, 1956, February 20, 1:1.

†Dr. Lanka Sundaram, a prominent Independent Member of Parliament from Andhra, had appended a dissenting Minute to

Legislative Assembly. According to the agreement, there would be one legislature for the whole of Andhra Pradesh, and one Governor advised by a Council of Ministers responsible to the State Assembly. However, the Telangana area would be treated as a region, especially with respect to certain specified matters. For the Telangana region, there would be a Regional Standing Committee of the State Assembly, consisting of the Members of the State Assembly belonging to that region including the Ministers from Telangana, but not including the Chief Minister. Legislation relating to specified matters would be referred to the Regional Committee, and proposals on such matters might also be made by the Regional Committee to the state government with regard to questions of general policy not involving any financial commitment other than expenditure of a routine and incidental character. The advice tendered by the Regional Committee would normally be accepted by the government and state legislature, but in case of difference of opinion, reference would be made to the Governor, whose decision would be final and binding. These provisions were to be reviewed after ten years, unless the agreement were reviewed and revised earlier.\*

This arrangement, as will have been noted, resembles that adopted for the Punjab. The most striking difference lies in the fact that for Punjab two Regional Committees had been established and that these Committees were based upon linguistic (and to large extent, communal) divisions. In Andhra, the Telangana Regional Committee was conceived as a standing body whose function was the safeguarding of interests of the former Hyderabad region.† The other parts of Andhra

this Report in which he expressed his concern that "every reasonable and legitimate safeguard for the people of Telangana" be taken, but in which he further urged that this be done "without concerting one region of the new State of Andhra Pradesh into a sort of imperium in imperio, with a minor legislature inside a major legislature, and with a minor Cabinet inside a major Cabinet." He urged that the word "standing" be used in describing the Committee. (Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, July 16, pp. 597-598.

From the assurances later given by the Home Ministry, it was clear that the Telangana Regional Committee was viewed as a standing committee.

\*The Hindu, 1956, August 11, 8:5.

†Among other safeguards for the Telangana region was that which guaranteed that surplus revenue from Telangana would be used for the development of that region only. (The Hindu, 1956, July 21, 7:1.)

did not seek such a committee, and the question of linguistic division did not arise, inasmuch as the state is predominantly Telugu-speaking.

The Andhra Pradesh Regional Committee for Telangana was constituted under Presidential Order on February 2nd, 1958. This Order outlined modifications to be made in the Rules of Business of the Andhra Government and in the Rules of Procedure of the Andhra Legislative Assembly. The subjects falling within the purview of the Regional Committee include many of the same subjects as those placed within the competence of the Punjab Regional Committees. As the following list for Andhra Pradesh indicates, there are some important additions in the case of the Telangana Committee.\*

- (1) development and economic planning within the framework of the general development plans and policies formulated by the state legislature;
- (2) local self-government (that is to say, the constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, district boards and other local authorities for the purpose of local self-government or village administration);
- (3) public health and sanitation, local hospitals and dispensaries;
- (4) primary and secondary education, including regulation of admissions to the educational institutions in the Telangana region;
- (5) prohibition of the consumption (except for medicinal purposes) of intoxicating liquors and of drugs which are injurious to health;
- (6) sale of agricultural land;
- (7) agriculture;
- (8) cottage and small-scale industries;
- (9) cooperative societies; and
- (10) markets and fairs.

Among the more controversial points arising out of the provisions for the Telangana Committee was that placing the sale of agricultural land under the control of the Regional Committee. Another point which drew some criticism was that making prohibition an optional matter for Telangana.†

\*Details of the Presidential Order are given in the Asian Recorder, 1958, February 1-7, pp. 1879-1880, and in The Hindu, 1958, February 4, 1:3.

†These were among the matters about which N. C. Chatterjee raised objection in his dissenting Minute to the Report of the Joint Committee on the Ninth Amendment Bill. (Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, 1956, July 16, p. 592.)

As in the case of Punjab, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh is charged with the responsibility of securing the smooth functioning of the Regional Committee. The Governor is made the final arbiter in instances of disagreement between the Legislative Assembly and the Regional Committee. In the event the Cabinet holds that it would not be expedient to give effect to a recommendation made by the Regional Committee or that the Regional Committee is not competent to make such a recommendation, the matter is referred by the Chief Minister to the Governor whose decision is final and binding. We have already suggested with regard to this provision as it applies in the Punjab, that there remains some question as to the extent to which the Governor's decision could be upheld as binding upon the legislature. In Andhra Pradesh the Presidential Order goes a step further in placing decisive power in the hands of the Governor. When the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, in the opinion of the Speaker, rejects or substantially changes a Bill as reported on by the Regional Committee, the matter is to be submitted to the Governor (by the Speaker). The Governor is empowered then to make a decision in the matter and to send a message to that effect to the Assembly. When the Governor's message has been conveyed to the Assembly by the Speaker, the Bill is then deemed to have been withdrawn, or, as the case might be, to have been passed by the Assembly in the form recommended by the Governor.

The manner in which the Governor would seek to use such powers remained, of course, to be seen. The device of the Regional Committee in Andhra Pradesh, as in the Punjab, could serve to adjust competing claims, to safeguard the interests of underdeveloped areas and to reassure minority peoples. The Regional Committees also fitted into what appeared to be a general centralizing trend. The Governor, as the agent of the Centre, could be expected to exercise a moderating, if strong, hand in resolving difficult problems arising out of particularist trends and sub-regional loyalties. Those who sought to achieve that delicate balance between efficient government and the satisfaction of sometimes irrational popular demands could take satisfaction in the Regional Committee device. For here was the machinery whereby, on the one hand, the work of government could proceed without being deadlocked and disrupted by move and counter-move of politically exploited linguistic, sub-regional or communal groups, and, on the other hand, the honest aspirations and genuine interests of the many communities within these states could be represented through democratic processes.

## ZONAL COUNCILS IN ACTION: THE FIRST ROUND

The government moved with noteworthy speed in inaugurating the Zonal Council system. The first meetings of the five Councils were scheduled to be held as soon as practicable following the general elections (February-March 1957) and the formation of new governments in the states. Even though the Councils were explicitly stated to be advisory and deliberative in character, the presence of the Chief Ministers of all states represented within each Zone, together with the Union Home Minister and senior advisers from the Central Planning Commission, gave to the Councils the character of unquestioned authority.

By mid-April (1957) Govind Ballabh Pant, Home Minister, and ex officio Chairman of each of the Zonal Councils, sent a note to the Chief Ministers of the states recommending procedures and programs. Each Zonal Council was advised to draw up a proposal for creating a pool of trained administrators and technical personnel to serve the states within its jurisdiction. The free inter-state exchange of senior officers belonging to both states and national services was one of the means whereby the government hoped to convert a state-centered administrative view into a Zonal view and thereby to achieve the integrated development of India's economy. Pooling of personnel was to extend also to armed police reserves. The Chairman called upon state officers to respect the resolutions of the Zonal Councils which, in turn, were to endeavor to search for the largest measure of agreement upon every issue.

When Home Minister Pant inaugurated the first meeting of a Zonal Council--that of the Northern Zone--he made explicit some of the "common interests" which Councils would be expected to discuss and upon which they could be expected to make recommendations. He went on to spell out the main objectives of the Zonal system:

1. to achieve an emotional integration of the country;
2. to help arrest the growth of acute State consciousness, regionalism, linguism and particularist trends;
3. to help remove any after-effects of separation so that the processes of reorganization, integration and economic advancement might coalesce and synchronize;
4. to enable the Centre and the States, which are dealing increasingly with matters economic and social, to co-operate and exchange ideas and experience in order that uniform policies for the common good of the community might be evolved and the ideal of a socialistic society achieved;
5. to promote the successful and speedy execution of major development projects; and

6. to secure some kind of political equilibrium between different regions of the country.\*

Zonal Councils, operating within the context of a federal system, were intended to aid the coordination of inter-state action under conditions of an increasing integration of the country through industrialization and the development of communications, water and power resources. The constituting Act had provided that Zonal Councils could hold joint meetings when conditions warranted. Even though some machinery already existed for the discussion of large-scale planning in the fields of economic development (notably, the National Development Council), and ad hoc arrangements had been made to deal with river valley projects, the Zonal Council system promised to embrace wider spheres of inter-state cooperation and more rapidly to advance the process of national development. In matters where the states had either clashed with one another or with the Centre (as in educational, labor and industrial policies) the Zonal Council offered a device which promised greater success. There appeared to be reason to hope that from the Zonal level it would be easier to keep in mind the national interest and to work for the "greater good of greater numbers."†

#### THE NORTHERN ZONE

In designing its case for the creation of a new and larger Punjab, the States Reorganisation Commission had pointed to the essential natural and economic unity of the area comprising the pre-1956 States of Punjab, PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh.§ Several of the states of North India had, in fact, experienced regional cooperation over a period of years. In 1950 the Bhakra Control Board was established to direct the construction and financing of the extensive Bhakra river-valley development project. Representatives of the states of Punjab, PEPSU and Rajasthan, together with members

\*Reported in The Hindustan Times, 1957, April 24, 1:7.

†See the opinion of "Observer" in the National Herald, 1957, April 28, 5:4.

§As we have seen, the majority opinion of the Commission recommended uniting the old Punjab, PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh into one large Punjab State. However, the Chairman of the Commission, S. Fazl Ali, appended a dissenting note which argued for a separate Himachal Pradesh to be administered by the Centre--a position accepted in the final reorganization. (See "Note on Himachal Pradesh," Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, pp. 208-243.)

of the central government, comprised the Bhakra Control Board. An Advisory Board to assist the Control Board also included representatives from the central government, and from Punjab, PEPSU, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.\*

The continuing utilization of the power potential in the North called for a long-term effort of coordinated industrial development and possibly a common tariff policy in the Zone. The Nangal hydro-electric grid already cut across the boundaries of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Delhi. Rapid development of some three million acres of land in the Punjab and Rajasthan through irrigation suggested coordination in such matters as water rates and crop-planning.

Other problems ancillary to the great river-valley projects also lent themselves to inter-state consideration. Such problems as soil conservation in the catchment area of the Sutlej and the Beas in Himachal Pradesh concerned more than one of the Northern states, as would the resettlement of persons expected to be displaced when the main Bhakra reservoir was completed by 1960.

In the field of transportation, inter-state cooperation was also strongly indicated. Himachal Pradesh, having virtually no railways, depends upon private road transport covering the area from points in the Punjab. Suggestions for nationalizing the road system clearly called for coordination between the two states concerned. Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, situated as they are along India's Northern border, not only share defence problems, and those of law and order, but they are also tied together in spheres of economic development. Punjab, moreover, provides the link between Jammu & Kashmir and the rest of India, a consideration mentioned by Home Minister Pandit Pant as he opened the first meeting of the Council for the Northern Zone, on April 23rd, 1957, in New Delhi.†

Matters of economic planning dominated the agenda.‡ The Council considered two notes from the Planning Commission on

\*For the personnel, organization and functioning of the Bhakra Control Board and the Advisory Board, see The Central Board of Irrigation Journal, Vol. VII, No. 6, November 1950, pp. 547-548 and The Hindustan Times, 1950, September 26.

†See reports of Pandit Pant's speech in the newspapers of April 24th, 1957.

‡For the names of those representing the several states at the first meeting of the Northern Zonal Council, see Appendix IV.



development and agricultural production programs. A committee was designated\* to study problems of manpower planning within the context of the Second Five-Year Plan. This committee was charged with exploring questions of the exchange of technical and administrative personnel among the several states and territories of the Zone, the setting up of technical training institutions on a complementary basis and the creation of a common pool of armed police reserves.

The Council also examined several other matters of specific inter-state concern. Punjab representatives accepted the proposal made by the Himachal Pradesh government to construct the bridges necessary for providing an all-weather road between Ambala (Punjab) and Nahan, and agreed to make available the necessary facilities to the Himachal Pradesh administration for constructing an all-weather link between Dalhousie (Punjab) and Khajiar--a route significant especially for tourist traffic. At the further request of the Himachal Pradesh representative, the Chief Minister of the Punjab agreed that his state would abolish the fee of Rs. 2,503 charged by the Punjab government for each mental patient from Himachal Pradesh institutionalized in Punjab. The Council examined a suggestion made by the Rajasthan government to encourage the flow of trade between the states and decided that the proposal drawn up by the Transport Advisory Council should be circulated to the states and the matter raised during the next meeting of the Council.

In other matters brought before the Council, Jammu & Kashmir raised the question of the supply of water and power to some areas of their state from the Punjab. Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir and Delhi asked that the tax levied on motor vehicles passing through the Punjab from their respective states be abolished. These and other questions regarding irrigation, transport and power were referred to the states concerned for further consideration.

It was agreed at this first meeting that the Council's headquarters would be New Delhi. B. D. Tewari, Deputy Secretary in the Home Ministry, was nominated as Joint Secretary of the Council. With regard to procedural matters, the order of rotation for the posts of Vice-Chairman and Secretary was determined on an alphabetical basis: Jammu &

\*The following were appointed to this committee: The Chief Minister of Rajasthan, the Irrigation Minister of Punjab, the Finance Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, the Lieutenant-Governor of Himachal Pradesh, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and an officer of the Union Government to be named later.

Kashmir first, then Punjab, followed by Rajasthan. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed thus became the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the first year. In the absence of the Chairman (the Union Home Minister) the Vice-Chairman would preside over meetings of the Council. The next meeting was scheduled to be held in Jammu & Kashmir, and that following in the Punjab.

The active participation of representatives of Jammu & Kashmir in the Council of the Northern Zone did not escape the notice of Indian observers. This was looked upon as another step in the process of Kashmir's integration with India, the Council serving as a forum for the discussion of Kashmir's problems with her neighboring states.\*

When the first meeting of this Council had adjourned, it was clear that much of the Zonal work would be performed by committees appointed to explore and to make recommendations upon matters of inter-state concern, as such matters arose. The appointment of the manpower committee was hailed as an important step in planning the efficient utilization of trained manpower in the Zone.† This precedent could be expected to influence decisions in the other Zones and to point the way towards the establishment of Zonal manpower directorates.

The meeting of the Council for the Northern Zone appeared to observers to have set a high standard for Zonal deliberations. The Council for the Eastern Zone was scheduled to meet a week later, and as attention shifted to Calcutta there was

\*The announcement that Jammu & Kashmir had decided to join the Northern Zonal Council was made by Premier Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed on May 3rd (1956). At the same time he rejected the suggestion that Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh be merged, calling it "a basically wrong approach," and made it clear that Kashmir would not entertain any integration or merger proposals. (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1956, May 4, 1:2.)

The incorporation of Kashmir in the Northern Zone of India drew strong protest from Pakistan. When the Northern Zonal Council held its first meeting with Jammu & Kashmir members present, Pakistan's permanent representative at the United Nations made formal protest in a letter to the President of the Security Council. He claimed that this action was "calculated to destroy the separate entity of the State," and that it constituted a violation of the Security Council's resolution on Kashmir. (The New York Times, 1957, April 30, 6:3.)

†See, for example, comment in Times of India, 1957, May 30, 6:7.

every expectation that constructive decisions at the Zonal level would continue.

## THE EASTERN ZONE

No less than the Northern Zone, Eastern India commands attention from the central government through considerations of defense, for the Eastern Zone has common frontiers with Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Burma and East Pakistan. Across the border from East Pakistan has come a stream of refugees into West Bengal, a movement creating economic strains and political complexities which have proved to be among the most vexatious of all problems in this part of India. If the many difficulties of refugee influx were to be overcome, it had long been clear that inter-state cooperation, as well as central government support, would have to be intensified. This problem, together with the tasks of long-range economic development, dominated the thinking of those responsible for drawing up the agenda of the first meeting of the Council for the Eastern Zone.

As had been the case in the North, the states of the Eastern Zone had had some experience with inter-state cooperation long before the inauguration of the Zonal system. Pandit Pant, in his address to the first meeting, drew upon past history to establish the case for common interests and common experience of the several states of the East. As he told the Council, most of the territory within the Zone formerly lay within the overall jurisdiction of the old Bengal Presidency, and in the pre-British period there had been the unifying influence of Moghul administration throughout much of the area. However, the more persuasive of the Home Minister's comments were those which touched upon recent links between the states, especially those arising from the development of the river-valleys of the East, and coordination of efforts under such bodies as the Ganga [Ganges] and Brahmaputra Flood Control Board and the Ganga Water Transport Board.

The development undertaken by the Damodar Valley Corporation, modeled upon the Tennessee Valley Authority, had involved both West Bengal and Bihar. Both states had already planned electricity or irrigation projects which were later to come under the centrally controlled Damodar Valley Corporation.\* Though the relationship between the governments

\*Bengal had worked out the Damodar-Hooghly Flushing and Irrigation Scheme, and Bihar had developed a "grid" plan to electrify the state's mica mines and to attract other industry. For an analysis of the involvement of the states and the central governments in the Damodar Valley Project, see Henry C. Hart, New India's Rivers (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1956), especially chapters 4 and 9.

of West Bengal and Bihar had not always been cordial, they had both on occasion surrendered state powers for the greater common good, and, as we have seen, a serious effort had been made in 1956 to unite the two states. As early as 1947, Shri Krishna Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar, expressed a conviction which, ten years later, might well have been applied to the objectives of the Zonal Council system. During debate in the Bihar Legislative Assembly on the Bill which would give up state powers over the Damodar to the national Parliament, the Chief Minister had answered the opposition's contention that the proposal might be good in some respects but that it would hurt Bihar, with the comment:

it sickens my heart to find my friends objecting to it on the ground that it will be more to the interest of Bengal than to Bihar . . . India is geographically a whole, and to that belief we have sworn.\*

The entire industrial region developed under the Damodar Valley Corporation required a common approach to transport, labor and other problems. Roads and waterways were seriously required to supplement the railways of the Zone. There had already been efforts from the central government to facilitate inter-state cooperation in road transport (which had been disrupted through the partition of the subcontinent in 1947) by modifying the Motor Vehicles Law. Coordinated development between the states of the Eastern Zone was required in many other economic spheres: iron and steel plants in Bihar and West Bengal drew upon ore from Orissa; Bihar provided coal and electrical power to Calcutta. And in addition to extensive industrial planning, the serious need for inter-state cooperation in the movement of food grains lay at the very foundation of the economic well-being of this region. The argument for an integrated approach in the Eastern Zone was indeed compelling.

As the Council for the Eastern Zone first met, on April 30th, 1957, it was decided to make Calcutta its headquarters, and to appoint B. C. Roy, Chief Minister of West Bengal, the Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for the first year.† Dr. Roy was to be succeeded by S. K. Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar.

The Eastern Zonal Council discussed the more pressing problems confronting its constituent states. Two notes from the Planning Commission relating to development problems of

\*Quoted by Hart, op. cit., p. 75.

†For the names of those representing the several states at this first meeting, see Appendix IV.

the Eastern Zone and to agricultural production occupied the attention of members of the Council. Restrictions imposed by Orissa and by Assam on the movement of foodgrains had, in the view of the West Bengal government, accentuated food shortages in West Bengal. Following discussion of this troublesome problem, the Council recommended that any further step which might affect another state within the Zone should first come before the Zonal Council. In an emergency, however, states were left free to take action and to inform other states concerned. This entire question of inter-state ban on the movement of foodgrains was left open for further detailed discussion by the Zonal Council.

The Council's approach to the problem of rehabilitation of displaced persons from East Pakistan attracted the greatest interest from political observers. One Calcutta paper\* commented editorially that "the success of the Zonal Council scheme will be judged in this region at least by the contribution that the Eastern Zonal Council can make to the task of rehabilitation of refugees." At its first meeting the Council was reported only to have discussed the problem. If the initial meeting proved disappointing, it was hoped that the Council would come to grips with the refugee problem in its future work.

#### THE CENTRAL ZONE

The Central Zone, consisting of two of the largest states of India--Uttar Pradesh with the largest population, and Madhya Pradesh with the second largest territory--includes much of India's richest agricultural land. Increased agricultural production in the Central Zone is an important national consideration, and the deliberations of the first meeting of this Zonal Council directly centered upon, or indirectly related to intensifying agricultural effort. The Council, meeting in Lucknow on May 2nd (1957), not only considered a memorandum from the Planning Commission detailing a plan for achieving revised food production targets, but also turned its attention to the related matters of irrigation, transport and law and order in the countryside. These problems clearly called for inter-state cooperation, and by the time the Zonal system was inaugurated, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh had already experienced many years of cooperative effort.

The most spectacular of the problems which face the states of the Central Zone is that of "dacoity" (banditry) in the rugged ravine territory of the Chambal river which flows

\*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1957, May 2.

across state boundaries. The neighboring areas, in both states, have long suffered from the incursions of predatory bands operating from ravine hide-outs. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have instituted a joint police command to deal with this problem, and it was clearly recognized that continued cooperation between the states was essential for law and order to be fully restored and maintained. As the Central Zonal Council opened its first meeting, the question was posed as to what extent the machinery of the Zonal system could strengthen inter-state action in solving the dacoity problem.

Additional problems shared by the adjoining states arise from the irregular demarcation of the border in some areas, especially that of the District Jhansi, a part of Uttar Pradesh extending into Madhya Pradesh by a narrow neck of territory only a few miles in width. Problems of law and order, of road transport and irrigation in these areas require close cooperation between the governments of both states.

Pandit Pant, in his address inaugurating the Central Zonal Council, reviewed common economic and development interests. The Rihand dam, on a tributary of the Son river in Mirzapur District (Uttar Pradesh) was, he pointed out, of especial importance in irrigating the bordering areas of Madhya Pradesh. The Matatila dam on the Betwa river which traversed portions of both states would, when completed, benefit both and call for continued cooperation between the states.

The question of easing restrictions on inter-state road transport became the concern of this Zonal Council, as it had in the Northern Zone. Madhya Pradesh especially suffers from a poverty of established communications. The relatively high expense of railway construction directed the attention of planners to the development of roads, a consideration which would require agreement on many related problems.

Such, then, were the matters to be considered by the Council for the Central Zone when it held its inaugural meeting on the first of May.\* The Council decided to establish its headquarters at Allahabad. Chief Minister Sampurnanand (Uttar Pradesh) was selected to serve as the Vice-Chairman for the first year, to be followed by Chief Minister Katju (Madhya Pradesh) with the second meeting of the Council to be held in Madhya Pradesh.

\*For a list of those representing the two states at this first meeting, see Appendix IV.

The Council discussed the general problems of dacoity, matters relating to irrigation (e.g., the collection of fees for water supplied to Madhya Pradesh through Uttar Pradesh canals) and considered the memorandum from the Planning Commission on economic development in the two states for 1957-1958. The Council agreed that immediate steps be taken to acquire land on both sides of the border for the resettlement of villagers displaced by the completion of the Rihand dam. As a step towards manpower planning, a Committee was appointed to assess these resources in the Zone.\*

In this initial meeting, much was left for further discussion. But the Zonal Council was formally established, and matters which could not be worked out between the two state governments could be expected to find their way to this higher, and perhaps more effective, level for decision. Whether the machinery of the Zonal Council was indeed so constituted as to help in the adjustment of conflicting claims was not yet clear. Observers who followed the meeting of the Council for the Central Zone asked whether or not the Council could, for instance, adjust the claim of Uttar Pradesh to special consideration with regard to industrial development in order to offset the loss she realized by the incorporation of the rich mineral area of Baghelkhand in Madhya Pradesh. Both states had extensive underdeveloped resources. Uttar Pradesh had entertained a grievance with regard to the preferential treatment the central government appeared to have given Madhya Pradesh in the location of major new industries. One commentator expressed the hope that the Zonal Council might play a constructive role in handling such instances of jealousies between states. "Inter-state rivalries will grow less sharp and the Planning Commission will find it easier to reconcile claims," he commented, ". . . as zonal co-operation increases, and the spirit of common endeavour finds firm root."† In the case of the Central Zone, there was good reason to hope that rivalries could be restrained and that Zonal cooperation could be nourished. For there had been a minimum of controversy between the two states at the time of states reorganization. The Central Zone is made up of homogeneous Hindi-speaking areas. Moreover, the dispute over the disposition of Baghelkhand had left little bitterness, and there were far more reasons for cooperation than for rivalry. The future for harmony in planning and in the solving of common problems appeared to be bright.

\*The Committee to consist of the chief secretaries and development commissioners of the two states.

†National Herald, 1957, May 4, 5:2.

## THE SOUTHERN ZONE

The states represented in the Southern Zone--Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Kerala--had undergone extensive changes in boundaries during the process of the reorganization of the states. As we have seen, Madras had been the first of the states to be reorganized on a linguistic basis, following widespread agitation for the creation of the separate Telugu-speaking State of Andhra. During the subsequent reorganization, parts of the residual Madras were transferred to Mysore, and there was an exchange of territory between Madras and Travancore-Cochin (Kerala). Both Mysore and Andhra had been greatly augmented by the three-way division which eliminated Hyderabad as a state.

The exclusion from the Southern Zone of the State of Mysore which, under the States Reorganisation Act, was assigned to the Western Zone along with the newly enlarged Bombay State, has already been noted. Had Mysore been included, the Southern Zone would have corresponded to one view of "Dakshina Pradesh," an Indian style "solid south," the formation of which had long been the dream of those South Indian leaders who feared the domination of the populous and relatively more prosperous North.\*

\*In recent years, notably since the creation of the separate State of Andhra, Dakshina Pradesh has been envisaged as a union of Madras, Kerala and Mysore. The first step in any such move has usually been taken to be that of the merging of Madras with Mysore. The question of Dakshina Pradesh has many facets, not only that of the North-South rivalry (which suggests one of the reasons for linking Mysore with the Western and not the Southern Zone), but also that of the complexity of communal politics in the South. Some of the keenest opponents of the creation of Dakshina Pradesh are, somewhat paradoxically, two (anti-Brahman) champions of Dravidistan, the Dravida Kazhagam and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The major announced objective of these organizations has been the creation of a state made up of areas in which Dravidian languages are spoken. However, the communal nature of these parties is underscored by their opposition to the establishment of a Dakshina Pradesh and to the creation of the Southern Zonal Council. These proponents of Dravidistan argued that they opposed the Zonal Council because it would be presided over by a Union Minister (i.e. Pandit Pant from Uttar Pradesh). A Hindustan Times observer commented: "One would have thought that if Dravida Nad were to consist of all these States, they would first seek to bring them together, and then break away from the Union . . . If they are now taking the opposite course, it is because they realize that [although]



Not only had Mysore been linked to the other Southern states by history, tradition and culture, but also by the dominating facts of geography. It was clear that problems of river and road development as well as of general industrial planning could not be adequately treated in the Southern Zonal Council without reference to Mysore. The common interests shared by Mysore with the other states in the Southern Zone were recognized in the invitation to the Chief Minister of Mysore to attend the Southern Zonal Council meeting. There was general satisfaction that one of the first decisions taken by the Zonal Council for the South was to assure that Mysore would be represented at all the Council's future meetings. In Pandit Pant's address inaugurating the Zone he replied to criticism of Mysore's exclusion in these words:

I may say at once that it was not the intention at any time that Mysore should be barred from any meetings of this Council which are of interest or are likely to be of interest to that State; and I hope that in practice it will be possible to make use, as often as may be necessary, of the provision for interzonal meetings which has deliberately been made for this purpose in the States Reorganisation Act. This should adequately serve the purposes which the Government represented in this Council or the Government of Mysore may have in view.\*

The invitation to Mysore permanently to be represented on the Southern Zonal Council was, however, hailed as a better alternative than inter-Zonal meetings for assuring the association of Mysore with regional decisions in the South.

In quite a different sector, the matter of inter-state cooperation in the South had arisen with regard to the regional food situation. On the day just preceding the first meeting of the Southern Zonal Council, the Food and Agricultural Ministry announced from New Delhi the creation of a rice zone in the South to include the States of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madras and Mysore. The timing of this

they are talking big about the South breaking away from the North, their influence is confined to Tamil Nad only and in it too among a small microscopic minority. If a larger State were formed in the South, they know full well that their influence will be reduced to next to nothing, and consequently while pretending to talk about Dravidastan, they are all the time anxious to keep the State [Madras] as small as possible." ("South India Review," The Hindustan Times, 1956, April 9, 7:2.)

\*Indian Express, 1957, July 12, 5:4.

announcement did not escape notice. One observer commented that there was "something odd about the fact that on food supplies, the most important issue concerning the zone, the decision was taken in separate session and announced the day before the Zonal Council meeting."\* The creation of the Southern rice zone emphasized a fact which few had disputed: the formal institution of the Zonal Councils could not solve all the problems which called for inter-state cooperation, nor were they intended to make unnecessary the convening of ad hoc bodies to deal with problems of an inter- or extra-Zonal character.

The advantages to be gained by cooperative effort in regional planning were as great, if not greater, in the South than in other parts of India. There already existed precedents for inter-state cooperation. An agreement providing irrigation water to Madras from the Periyar river in Travancore had been operative since 1886. The entire Periyar river basin could be developed to benefit both Kerala and Madras. Rapid development of electrical power on both sides of the Western Ghats further suggested integration of the electrical system managed by the Electricity Boards of Kerala and Madras.

The connection between Andhra and Madras had been of an intimate nature, for both had shared a single administration before the creation of Andhra in 1953. An extension of the canal system connecting these two states was suggested by Pandit Pant as he reviewed common interests throughout the Zone. His suggestion that it might even be possible to link the waters of the Godavari and the Krishna to bring them as far south as Chingleput District in Madras excited considerable attention in Madras State.† The potential of development through hydro-electric projects, elaboration of transport systems and extension of port facilities to encourage foreign trade--all of these, as well as other development objectives, could best be realized through regional planning.

There was one further service which the Zonal Council might perform in the South: it could press forward Southern claims to a fair proportion of the nation's development projects. The South, much less highly developed industrially than either the Western or Eastern Zones, could present directly its concerted views with regard to the maintenance of

\*Indian Express, 1957, July 13, 6:1.

†See The Hindu, 1957, July 13, which, quoting Pant, sub-titled its report on the Zonal Council's meeting, "Godavari Waters for Madras No Dream."

regional balance. It was clearly recognized that in industry, mining and transport no substantial projects could be undertaken without the assistance of the Centre. The Zonal Council could play a significant role in the nurturing of fruitful cooperative relations between the Union and the state governments. That a Minister of the central government would continue to serve as the Chairman of the Zonal Councils gave greater assurance that the particular needs of the South would be heard in quarters close to the ultimate decision-making.

The Southern Zonal Council met at Madras on July 11th (1957).<sup>\*</sup> The first order of business was the consideration of two notes submitted by the Planning Commission. One of these dealt with the recasting of state plans in consequence of the reorganization of states; the second was addressed to the agricultural production program to achieve revised food production targets in the Zone. The Council appointed a Committee to inquire into adjustments required in the five-year plans of the several states and to make recommendations with regard to the implementation of these plans. A sub-committee was also appointed to examine the deficiency of manpower and to draw up a training program for the Zone. This committee was to be comprised of one Minister from each state.

Madras was decided upon as the headquarters for the Southern Zone, and the order of rotation for the posts of Vice-Chairman and Secretary was to be first Madras, then Andhra Pradesh, followed by Kerala. The second meeting was scheduled to be held in Hyderabad, and the third in Trivandrum.<sup>†</sup>

At the conclusion of the first meeting of the Council for the Southern Zone, there was no hint as to the extent to which the Council's deliberations might become involved in the political tensions which are peculiar to the South. The idea of Dakshina Pradesh had only occasional mention in press comment on the Southern Zone. A Deccan Herald editorial noted that the background of each of the Zones of India was conceived in terms of the cultural homogeneity and the unity of each region, which led to the further comment that, for the South, this might present

<sup>\*</sup>For the names of those representing the several states at this first meeting, see Appendix IV.

<sup>†</sup>Proceedings of the Zonal Council meeting are reported in the Indian newspapers of July 12th and 13th, 1957.

a glimmering outline of the notional map of Dakshina Pradesh, an idea that might (for aught we know) grow in the mind of future constitutional thinkers. . . .\*

However, the greater weight of comment focused upon the evidence that the Zonal Councils were so designed as to provide direct links to the Centre.

A second political consideration very much in the minds of Congress leaders was the role which the Kerala government--the first and only Communist government in power in the states of India--might play in the deliberations of the Zonal Council. The Communist Chief Minister of Kerala had, it appeared, shown no sign at the first meeting of the Council of any intention either to disrupt or to withhold cooperation. One observer commented:

Kerala has maintained correct relations with the Centre so far and there is no reason why its co-operation with the two neighbouring States should prove more difficult than its relations with the Union Government.†

One of the controlling factors in the part to be played by Kerala might well be the ineluctable fact that Kerala is a food deficit area, and that Andhra normally has a food surplus.§ There were good reasons for any government in Kerala to cooperate with fellow member-states of the Zone. However, in this context, one could not overlook the decision taken on the order of rotation of the states for filling the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council: Kerala was placed last, following both Madras and Andhra.

\*1957, July 13.

†"Current Topics," Times of India, 1957, July 13, 6:3.

§The government of Kerala has not only been eager to have as large an area as possible from which to meet its rice requirements, but Tanjore (in Madras) has been of especial concern because of the recognized partiality of Kerala residents for Tanjore rice. Madras, whose deficit in rice is marginal, would normally prefer to keep the Tanjore district surplus and let the Centre meet Kerala's deficit. Before the creation of the "rice zone" in the South to rationalize movement of this food grain, Andhra had engaged in a lively export trade in rice outside the Zone, selling on a large scale to Bengal, Bombay and Saurashtra at highly favorable prices.

## THE WESTERN ZONE

The Western Zone of India includes the bilingual State of Bombay, and the State of Mysore. The struggle between Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking partisans over the redrawing of state boundaries with regard to Gujarat, Maharashtra and, especially, the disposition of Bombay City, had resulted in widespread dissatisfaction and, in places, serious disaffection which was likely to color political developments for some time to come. It could, as well, pose some serious administrative problems. When the final decision was made with regard to the reorganization of Bombay State, the question of the Zonal alignments had also to be reconsidered.

It had earlier been assumed that Mysore would take its place in the Southern Zone and, indeed, Mysore's interests and associations were more closely linked with the South than with the West. The inter-state character and purpose of the Zonal arrangements required, however, that another state be added to the enlarged Bombay to form a Western Zone. And though Mysore did appear to belong to the South, there were problems which she also shared with Bombay. At the conclusion of the meeting with the Southern Zonal Council, the Chief Minister of Mysore, S. Nijalingappa, indicated his satisfaction with the Council's decision to invite Mysore to participate in the Southern Zone on a permanent basis. Such an arrangement was interpreted by some as tantamount to dual membership for Mysore in the Zonal Councils of both the West and the South.\*

Not the least of the problems shared by Bombay and Mysore were those which had arisen out of the reorganization of states. Large Kannada-speaking areas, formerly part of Bombay State, had been transferred to Mysore. Administrative problems and border disputes were of mutual concern. It was also clear that the economic development of both Bombay and Mysore could be substantially advanced by cooperative planning.

Pandit Pant, in his inaugurating address,† touched upon the possibility of establishing an inter-connection between

\*See Deccan Herald, 1957, July 14, 2:5. The Chief Minister indicated that at all future meetings of the Southern Zonal Council Mysore would be represented by the full complement of three Ministers and Secretaries, though no official announcement was made of such a decision at that time. Nijalingappa referred to the Southern rice zone which had been created by grouping Andhra, Madras, Kerala and Mysore, and emphasized Mysore's closer affinity to the South.

†Reported in the newspapers of September 21st, 1957. See especially Times of India, 7:4.

the various hydro-electric projects which utilize the waters of the Krishna Basin. The Jog-Karnatak project which had originated as an inter-state endeavor now lay within the sole jurisdiction of the Mysore government. However, the power potential in North-west Mysore suggested development which could make power available to Bombay as well as to Mysore.

Not only could power development profit by inter-state cooperation, but the pressing problem of waters for irrigation concerned the two states. Waters from the western watershed of the Western Ghats could be harnessed to supply scarcity areas to the east of the Western Ghats. Trade also was an important factor which involved both states, especially in the Belgaum area where a flourishing exchange of cotton for textile goods crossed state boundaries. The Zonal Council was expected to tackle the problem of liberalizing and improving inter-state road transport and to evolve a coordinated plan for developing minor ports on the Bombay and Mysore coasts.

When the Western Zonal Council met on September 20th in Mysore, Chief Minister Chavan of Bombay was elected to serve as the first Vice-Chairman, to be followed by Chief Minister Nijalingappa of Mysore.\* Headquarters of the Council were to be established in Bombay.

At this first meeting the Western Zonal Council appointed committees to investigate inter-state manpower resources, to coordinate power generation and to recommend the development of transport systems for the two states. It also decided to initiate an aerial survey preparatory to planning the diversion of waters from the watershed of the Western Ghats to scarcity areas.

Among the problems which confronted the states of the Western Zone, the most immediately disturbing--that of border adjustments between Bombay and Mysore--did not appear on the Council's agenda. This question, which was touched upon by Pandit Pant in his inaugural address, became the subject of talks among the two Chief Ministers and Pandit Pant the day following the Council meeting. This meeting on border questions was reported as preliminary in nature, and details of the discussion were not made public.

It clearly had been the intention of the Home Minister to initiate all Zonal Councils in as favorable an atmosphere

\*For the names of those who represented the two states at this first meeting, see Appendix IV.

as possible. Thorny problems such as that of food scarcity in the Southern Zone, and that of adjustment in the Western Zone were kept out of initial Council meetings. If the Zonal Councils were to perform a substantial function in the administrative life of the country, it was clear that they would have to come to grips with the more serious problems which arose out of inter-state relations. Nevertheless, the tensions which had been generated in the course of events leading to the reorganization of states demanded the utmost in diplomacy on the part of those responsible for piloting the initial Zonal Council deliberations. As the last of the Zonal Councils concluded its inaugural meeting, Pandit Pant and his assistants could rest assured that the Zonal Council system had been successfully launched and that the five "first" meetings had gone off without incident.

## EPILOGUE

Characteristic of the first decade in the history of independent India are at once turbulence and steady advance, struggle and outstanding achievement. If the Indian Union has been beset by enormous difficulties and deeply complex problems, it has also witnessed extensive development highlighted by some remarkable solutions. A problem so complex as that posed by the agitation for linguistic states raised grave questions as to the strength and security of Indian national unity. But India has had extensive experience with complex problems, and Indian statesmanship has never wanted for imaginative solutions. The problems, with their consequent response in chronic agitation and sporadic violence, are often more dramatic than the programs undertaken to solve them. In this study we have focused upon some of the means through which India has attempted to counter the threat to national unity.

The planner--especially if he comes to India from the West--is readily seized by the crying need for development, for cooperation, for the overall view. He understandably grows impatient with many sectional and local interests and, perhaps because he knows so little about their history, their emotional appeal, and thereby their political complexities, he tends either to ignore or to discredit them. A review of India's attempts to secure "unity in diversity" underscores not only the problems, but the achievements of a challenging period. The Zonal Council system had, above all, the objective of the "emotional integration" of the country, to use the Home Minister's phrase. A corrective to over-emphasis upon sectional and linguistic loyalties, an effort to establish values transcending language and region, a forum for fruitful cooperation--these were some of the ways in which that objective was stated.

The first meetings of the Zonal Councils were exploratory in nature. Later meetings give some evidence that the Councils may indeed fulfill the task which has been set them. The fears of those who had argued that the Zonal venture might result in the absorption of the participating states have not yet been realized, nor have the fears of others that the Councils might develop into powerful bodies between state and Centre which would weaken both Centre and state and displace the federal balance enshrined in the Constitution. In 1958 it would be foolhardy to deny either of these as possible eventualities. For in India we continue to witness the welding of many sub-nations into a great State; we continue to witness the growth of constitutional forms and the modification of India's basic political framework. One can, however, point to a few straws in the wind. And these suggest that the process of integration is outweighing centrifugal forces.



We have seen that in the midst of stormy agitation for the establishment of linguistic states, there emerged the idea of the multilingual state with Regional Committees or councils to safeguard sub-regions within such states. A bold effort to bring about the merger of Bihar with West Bengal failed. In Bombay and in Punjab the bilingual solution, at least temporarily, found acceptance. Recent events suggest that changes will yet be made in both those states, for sectional claims have found political expression, and satisfactions in the solution may not be great enough to resist particularist agitation.

In Andhra, on the other hand, there is some evidence of a very different development. The Andhra Pradesh State Assembly in the summer of 1958 passed an amendment to the rule prescribing the language to be used in the legislature. Formerly, proceedings of the House were required to be in Telugu or English. The amended rule lays down that proceedings are to be in English, though Members may speak in Telugu, or Hindi, or, if they do not know either of these languages, in their mother tongue. The emotion which had been aroused over language has, to large extent, been spent. Moreover, Andhras appear to be so well satisfied with their new and separate and enlarged state that they have, for the time being at least, been more or less counted out when the question of a Dakshina Pradesh (a Southern province) is mooted. Meanwhile, relations between Madras and Andhra appear to have markedly improved. The boundary question which had been a source of agitation and bitterness since 1953, when Andhra was separated from Madras, has been settled in an atmosphere of noteworthy cordiality. Meanwhile, separatist influences have become more pronounced in Madras where discrimination against linguistic minorities has been aggravated by the factor of increasing unemployment.

What, then, do such observations suggest? Are we to conclude that the proponents of linguistic states were, after all, correct, and that time will prove in other instances, as it appears to have shown in Andhra, that only in satisfying popular sentiment can solutions be found? Writing at this date, there is surely not sufficient margin of perspective from which one can put forward any adequate answers to this question. It is clear that popular sentiment cannot be ignored. Developments in Andhra suggest there is sound basis for satisfaction in the achievements of India's first (post-independence) linguistic state. It is also clear that continuing effort will be imperative if other problems are to be contained. In the cases of Bombay and Punjab, the question arises as to the merit of the bilingual state as set over against two unilingual states buttressed by a Zonal Council. The flexibility of the new device has already been noted, and the direction in which it may further evolve will depend upon some of the factors noted in the course of reviewing the

developments through the initial phase of the Zonal Councils in action. To some extent the evolution of these and other institutions will be influenced by the process of economic development which will bring in its wake new interests and new loyalties. Planning has not only moved across state borders through the Zonal Councils, and through other zonal arrangements (as represented, for example, by food control zones and railway zones), but planning has been initiated through a sub-regional approach. As has been suggested in the Interim Report of the Indian Statistical Institution's Regional Survey Unit for Mysore, "It may be that a realisation of common problems among the differing parts of the Coastal Region will grow almost more because of the bridging of the estuaries than because of the formation of the linguistic State."\* As technological and economic advances are made, the several parts of India will undoubtedly become increasingly inter-dependent. The events of the past decade suggest, however, that the administrator, the physio-agronomist, the planner, may never be free from what may appear to him to be obstacles growing out of movements representing particularist sentiments transformed into political objectives. Such is the price of diversity. The discovery and development and application of the processes and machinery through which unity in diversity may be secured is the task of statecraft.

Some analysts, in reviewing the series of decisions made by the Prime Minister and his government with regard to a single problem (as, for example, the reorganization of Bombay State), have characterized policy as vacillating and leadership as indecisive. It appears to this writer that the assessment must be made from a broader perspective. Given India's commitment to democratic methods, the process through which the leaders of India arrived at decisions was, in the circumstance, necessarily tentative. There are times in the integration of parts into a unified whole when time itself provides the key. When V. P. Menon reviewed the accomplishment of the States Ministry in the integration of the princely States immediately following independence, he recalled these words of a distinguished British administrator: "I do not think they know so well as we old ones what a valuable gentleman Time is. How much better work is done when it does itself than when done by the best of us." It is doubtlessly too early to make a prognosis, but the contemporary history of India lends support to the hopeful determination of Indian statesmen whose quietly confident spirit V. P. Menon reflected. "To have dissolved 554 States," he wrote, "by integrating them into the pattern of the Republic; to have

\*Mysore State; A Regional Synthesis, Interim Report, Vol. II (Bangalore: Indian Statistical Institute, 1958), p. 1.

brought about order out of the nightmare of chaos whence we started, and to have democratized the administration in all the erstwhile States, should steel us on to the attainment of equal success in other spheres."\*

Clearcut decisions in the India of 1956 could have led either to the realization of separatist movements or to dictatorial government and more widely spread bloodshed. The persistent, continued search for solutions, the postponement of decisions, the pursuit of the best articulation of parts--these were elements in the only policy open to a government based upon democratic principles. There were no easy solutions.

The Zonal Councils and the Regional Committees had evolved in a period of political turmoil. They were fashioned through untiring efforts to adjust competing claims within a democratic, parliamentary system. To no small extent they were the result more of experiment than of experience. In the case of the Regional Committees in the Punjab, there was experience only with a formula intended to satisfy the demands of linguistic and communally oriented groups which, if not satisfied, threatened political disaffection. The Regional Committee arrangement, made possible through statutory provision and taken together with the general constitutional provisions guaranteeing safeguards for linguistic minorities, was the result of an effort to relieve a politically critical situation.

In the case of the Zonal Councils there had been some base of experience. The demarcation of the country into zones had first been tried within the Congress organization. In reviewing the course of the evolution of India's constitutional framework, one is reminded of the important role which the Congress Party has long played in piloting new approaches and in testing novel methods and forms. Just as the movement for linguistic states had first gained impetus through the organization of the Congress Party according to linguistic-cultural units, so had the means for countering divisive trends which arose from that movement. The Congress experience with zonal arrangements had not been extensive. It would be misleading to suggest that the Zonal Council system emerged as a device well tested in the Congress, or indeed, that the Congress zonal organizations bore much resemblance either in structure or function to the Zonal Councils. It is, however, a point worthy of note in considering one of the most striking aspects of the Zonal Council system--its embodiment in the

\*The Story of the Integration of the Indian States (New York: Macmillan, 1956), p. 493.

fundamental law of the land. The permanent statutory character of the Zonal Councils reflects the determination of Indian leaders to give substance and strength to a political device intended to arrest further trends towards divisiveness.

The Zonal Councils and the Regional Committees were presented to the country as devices through which economic planning and development could best be pursued. Such functions were, without doubt, basic to their conception. But underlying and informing the institution of the Zonal Councils and the Regional Committees were grave political considerations. Perhaps in no development in recent Indian history have economic, political, linguistic and social factors become so intertwined as they have in that which gave rise to these devices designed to set regionalism over against provincialism in an effort to promote Indian national unity.

## APPENDIX I

### "CALL TO THE NATION" RESOLUTION\*

During the last three months the Working Committee and its Sub-Committee have laboured incessantly and with anxious care in order to find as large a measure of agreement as possible in regard to the reorganisation of States. At an early stage they expressed the opinion that the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission should be generally accepted, such changes as were considered necessary being made by agreement. The Sub-Committee appointed by the Working Committee for this purpose met and discussed various proposals with representatives of all the States concerned and endeavoured to find a way of agreement. In a number of cases, agreement was reached and the proposals of the Commission were accepted with minor variations.

II. The Committee were, above all, anxious that the unity and solidarity of India should be maintained and furthered, and they noted with deep regret that disruptive forces were at work in the name of linguistic States, but often with other aims in view. They tried to check them and to emphasise that primary importance should be attached to the solidarity of India as a whole and not to administrative divisions. Unfortunately, disruptive elements, taking advantage of the people's love of their language, misled many people and gathered strength.

III. The Committee paid very particular attention to the future of the great State of Bombay. In their desire to arrive at an agreed solution of this problem, they had numerous consultations with their colleagues from the various parts of Bombay State, and as a consequence, certain proposals were put forward from time to time. Each one of these proposals appeared to have been accepted at the time, but was later rejected. Finally, again in consultation with the people concerned, the decision in regard to the Bombay State was announced, together with other decisions.

IV. In spite of the efforts of the Committee, serious disturbances took place in Bombay City, resulting in vast damage to person and property. Bombay and India were disgraced and dishonoured. In some other parts of India also deplorable occurrences, though on a lesser scale, took place. All these occurrences have produced a situation which imperils

\*Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1956, January), pp. 2-6.

the future of India and her people. The ideals for which India has stood have been repudiated and trampled under foot not only by the miscreants who indulged in this orgy of violence but also by those who gave them direct or indirect support. Even the pictures of the Father of the Nation were insulted. It is clear that those who indulged in this disgraceful behaviour cared little for India or the wellbeing of her people. They were either anti-social and anti-national elements or those who had been misled into these wrong courses. There can be no progress of any kind through mob violence and denial of democratic and peaceful methods.

V. Even though mob violence has been curbed by Governmental action, the situation that has arisen is a dangerous one and full of peril for the nation. No citizen of India who loves his country, and certainly no Congressman can view this situation without the gravest anxiety. In the larger context of things it is of relatively small importance what re-arrangement of States there might be within India. It is of the highest importance that anti-national, reactionary and anti-social forces should not be allowed to lead the country to disruption and disaster. It is the primary duty, therefore, of every Indian to realise the dangers of this present situation and to do his or her utmost to stop all activities and trends which are doing so much injury to the country.

VI. It should be clearly understood that there can be no surrender to violence and methods of terrorism and that they have to be met with all the forces of the State in order to protect innocent citizens and the wellbeing of the nation. It must also be clearly understood that no changes will be made in the decisions already arrived at or that might be taken later in regard to the reorganisation of States because of violence or terroristic methods.

VII. The Committee have been informed that some Ministers and members of Legislatures have offered or propose to offer their resignations from their Governments or Legislatures. Such resignations, in the present context, can only encourage mob action and violence and are injurious to the nation as well as to the causes they are supposed to further. Even from the point of view of the Congress Constitution, no resignation can be tendered without the approval of the Parliamentary Board or the Working Committee. No Pradesh Congress Committee is competent to demand such resignations and any such action is ultra vires of the Constitution and cannot be approved. All such resignations, where they have been made, should be withdrawn.

VIII. Recent events have demonstrated the grave danger of encouraging any tendencies which promote disruption, separatism and provincialism, and it has become the urgent and

primary task of the nation to curb these tendencies and to give a new direction to people's thinking. The whole question of the reorganisation of States must, therefore, be viewed from this positive point of view so that it might lead to the promotion of Indian unity.

IX. The Working Committee, therefore, call upon the nation and, in particular, every Congressman to put forth every effort to meet the challenge of this grave situation and not to allow any difference of opinion over relatively minor matters to come in the way of this larger effort. For every Congressman it is essential to work for the unity and discipline of the Congress which has been the strongest force in India in bringing about the integration of all parts of this great country. To weaken that force is to weaken India at a moment when broad horizons open out for her to progress. It is the duty of every Pradesh Congress Committee as well as all the other Congress Committees to preserve this discipline of the Congress and to adhere to the ideals of the Congress, even though this might lead for the moment to unpopularity. It has been the Congress policy not only to have the right objective but always to remember that right means have to be adopted. At a time of crisis and difficulty it is all the more important for these basic facts to be remembered and not weakly to surrender to evil forces. The Congress has been the historic agent for achieving India's freedom and for the realisation of the manifest destiny of the Indian people. Freedom has been achieved but is imperilled afresh not by any external force but by our own inner weaknesses. The Congress is, therefore, called upon again to defend this freedom which has been won at such great cost. Every Indian who cherishes this freedom must defend it, keeping the ideals and high destiny of our country always in view.

## APPENDIX II

### JOINT STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CHIEF MINISTERS OF WEST BENGAL AND BIHAR\*

Recent developments in various parts of India in regard to the proposals for the reorganisation of the States have caused us and many others profound dismay. Provincial and linguistic feelings have been roused to such a pitch that separatist tendencies are imperilling the unity of India. This situation has been discussed at some length by the Working Committee of the Congress who have passed a resolution on this subject. In this resolution they have drawn attention to the grave danger that faces the nation and have suggested that the whole question of the reorganisation of States must be viewed from a positive point of view so that it might lead to the promotion of India's unity.

We have given earnest thought to this situation and to the resolution of the Working Committee, and feel that we, the Chief Ministers of Bihar and West Bengal, should endeavour to give some content to this proposal in the larger interest of the nation as well as the interests of our two States.

The Government of India has given its decision on the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission regarding the border areas of West Bengal and Bihar. As subsequent events have shown, neither the Report nor the Government of India's decision has given satisfaction to the people either of Bengal or of Bihar. The people of Bihar are dissatisfied because the decision means the transfer of some territory from Bihar to West Bengal, and on the other hand, the people of West Bengal feel that their State has not been given enough territory.

These feelings are natural and are easy to understand when the decisions are considered from the point of view only of the two respective States, but we cannot forget the major fact that these two States are parts of the Indian Union and are closely allied to each other in many ways. Some of the border areas between the two States have many common features and, from the economic point of view, many projects also concern the two States. Inevitably, there has to be close co-operation between the two to their mutual advantage. Any step which creates misunderstanding and leaves a sense of bitterness and frustration will be harmful to both the States

\*Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: The Indian National Congress, 1956, January), pp. 7-9.



as well as to the larger cause of India, to which all of us are devoted. We feel, therefore, that every attempt should be made to find a more permanent solution of this problem which puts an end to these tendencies towards separatism and enables the people of these two States to co-operate in the larger interests of the nation and their own States.

We propose, therefore, that the two States should be merged, one with the other, to form one single State. It was not very long ago that Bengal and Bihar were parts of one State. It should not be difficult to create an atmosphere of a happy voluntary merger. There is no question in this of either State having to submit to any decision imposed upon it, but rather of their own free will they should come to this important decision which, we have no doubt, will be beneficial to the two States and will lead to a larger life and greater prosperity. From the economic point of view and that of the Five-Year Plans, it will also be easier to plan for progress in both these areas. In particular, this will be a significant example of that positive approach to the problem of Indian unity to which reference has been made in the Working Committee's resolution. We are confident that this approach for the solution of a difficult problem will be welcomed by all right-thinking and far-sighted people not only in our two States but in the country.

While we have made this proposal and expressed our agreement to the merger of the two States of Bihar and West Bengal in full confidence of its acceptance by the people concerned, it is clear that the details of it will have to be carefully worked out, the people concerned will have to be consulted and an atmosphere of voluntary re-union and co-operation has to be created. To that end we intend to devote ourselves immediately. We trust that the Government of India will give us their co-operation in this great task. We are happy to state that the Working Committee of the Congress have welcomed this joint proposal of ours.

Signed: B. C. ROY  
Chief Minister of Bengal

Signed: S. K. SINHA  
Chief Minister of Bihar

The Working Committee adopted the following resolution regarding the Joint Statement:

"The Working Committee welcome the joint statement of the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Bihar regarding the proposal to merge the two States of West Bengal and Bihar with each other to form one State and congratulate them on their wisdom and foresight."

### APPENDIX III

#### THE "UNITED STATES OF WEST BENGAL AND BIHAR" AS OUTLINED BY DR. B. C. ROY (January 31st, 1956)\*

(1) The united States may be called 'The United States of West Bengal and Bihar' like the States of Travancore and Cochin.

(2) That should be an assurance that the culture and the language of each State should be protected; that the united States will have two official languages, Bengali and Hindi. Both the languages will be official for the entire State. It may be that in practice certain pre-eminence may be given in one State to a language, i.e., in West Bengal, Bengali would have pre-eminence in educational affairs with Hindi as a compulsory second language and in Bihar Hindi will be the prominent language with Bengali as the second language. But in border areas the two languages would be equally encouraged.

(3) No such union would be viable if there is any attempt on the part of one State to dominate over the other. In many ways each State will continue its own life subject to a common approach to major problems. The development projects in each area of the two States so united and the Five-Year Plan proposed by each State and approved by the Planning Commission will continue to be implemented by the respective States. The resources which would be developed by each area as approved by the Planning Commission will continue to be raised and employed by that area, although in future, development may be a common objective of the two States.

It so happens that the richest area in India from the point of view of mineral resources is the area which comprises part of West Bengal, part of Bihar and part of Orissa. If properly developed, this area will become the heart of industrial India. Any scheme of development of this area must involve the closest co-operation between West Bengal and Bihar so that both States might benefit fully. There should be no delays in drawing up schemes of developments as well as implementing them. Such delays are almost inevitable if the two States function separately or if there is a feeling of rivalry and conflict between the two. In such cases, both will suffer and the areas will not be developed as they should be.

\*As reported in The Statesman, 1956, February 1, 7:5.

(4) It has been asked, will such a union come in the way of political, economic or cultural life of the two States? Economically, as has been pointed out, it is quite clear that it would be advantageous to both. Politically also the Union should prove beneficial because in some ways West Bengal and Bihar are complementary to each other and by coming together, the spirit of conflict will be removed. Culturally, there is no reason why either State should suffer. With the growth of economy, rapid cultural advancement would take place and protection of such culture in either State will be ensured.

(5) In this united State there should be one Governor and one Public Service Commission. Rules may be framed so that while recruitment to the higher posts in the combined State might be thrown open to residents of either State, recruitment to the lower posts in each area might ordinarily be made from amongst the residents of that area. There is no reason why the two High Courts should not continue to function, as their work is sufficiently heavy.

(6) There will be one Cabinet and one Legislature. In addition to the Chief Minister belonging to one region, it may be desirable to have a Deputy Chief Minister belonging to the other region. A convention may grow for the Chief Ministers to be chosen alternatively from the two regions.

(7) There might be two Regional Councils, one for each of the major language areas. Each Regional Council will consist of members elected to the Legislature from that particular region. The President of this Council will be a Minister from that region. The special duty of the Council will be to look after the interests of that region in regard to the subjects dealt with by the Council. The subjects will be mainly those of development under the Five-Year Plan, Education, Health and other social services. These Regional Councils will not have any legislative authority. They will advise and make recommendations about the subjects allotted to each Council to the Cabinet or to the State Legislature and by practice and convention their advice will be accepted. In case of conflict between the two regions or between the Councils and the State Cabinet some provision may be made by appointing an authority to give its final decision on the points at issue.

(8) Generally speaking, therefore, the internal structure of the two regions should continue as it is and would not be interfered with. For example, the land system, the tenancy laws, the modes of taxation, the raising of revenue and provision for social services may continue to be distinct in one State as against the other. The schemes for these have been framed on a particular basis in each State and it would not be wise to interfere with them immediately unless it be by common consent.

(9) It is obvious that the principal capital of the State should be Calcutta. Patna may be a second capital and the Legislature may meet in either place. The Law and Order Department in both the States should be common.

## APPENDIX IV

### DELEGATES ATTENDING THE FIRST ZONAL COUNCIL MEETINGS\*

#### The Northern Zonal Council

- For Punjab:                   Pratap Singh Kairon  
                                  Chief Minister  
Gian Singh Rarewala  
                                  Irrigation and Electricity  
Surajmal  
                                  Health, Medical and Panchayats
- For Rajasthan:               Haribhau Upadhyaya  
                                  Finance, Excise and Taxation, Basic  
                                  Education, Khadi and Village  
                                  Industries and Social Welfare  
Ramkishore Vyas  
                                  Home (except Transport, Stationery  
                                  and Printing and Government  
                                  Presses), Law and Legal  
                                  Remembrancer's Office, Judicial,  
                                  Irrigation and Power  
                                  (Chief Minister Mohan Lal Sukhadia was  
                                  absent because of illness.)
- For Jammu & Kashmir:       Ghulam Mohammad Bakshi  
                                  Prime Minister  
G. M. Sadiq  
                                  Education and Health  
Girdhari Lal Dogra  
                                  Finance, Audit and Accounts,  
                                  Customs and Excise, Income Tax and  
                                  Banking

\*The following lists of Ministers representing their respective states at the first meetings of the Zonal Councils have been compiled from newspaper sources. In addition to the regular delegates, the Home Minister, Pandit Pant, served as Chairman for each Council's first meeting. The names of other officials attending by special invitation have been noted where this information is available. In some cases (e.g. that of the Eastern Zone), the listing is incomplete. The spelling of names and the portfolios held have been taken from India 1957 (Delhi: The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1957).

X

For Delhi:                   A. D. Pandit  
                                  Chief Commissioner  
                          Gopinath Aman  
                                  Chairman of Public Relations  
                                  Committee  
                          Dr. Yudhvair Singh  
                                  Chairman of Industries Advisory  
                                  Committee

For Himachal Pradesh: Bajrang Bahadur Singh Bhadri  
                                  Lieutenant-Governor

The Chief Secretaries and Development Commissioners from each of the states were also present at the meeting, as were Sardar Nawab Singh, acting as advisor from the Union Planning Commission, and V. T. Krishnamachari, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, attending by special invitation.

The Eastern Zonal Council

For Assam:                   Bishnuram Medhi  
                                  Chief Minister  
                          Motiram Bora  
                                  Education, Home  
                          Kamakhya Prasad Tripathi  
                                  Planning and Development, Labour,  
                                  Electricity, Industries

For Bihar:                   Sri Krishna Sinha  
                                  Chief Minister  
                          \*Shah Ozair Munemi  
                                  Jails, Relief and Rehabilitation

For West Bengal:           B. C. Roy  
                                  Chief Minister  
                          P. C. Sen  
                                  Food, Relief and Supplies, Refugee  
                                  Relief and Rehabilitation

For Orissa:                 Harekrushna Mahtab  
                                  Chief Minister

For Manipur:               P. C. Mathews  
                                  Chief Commissioner

\*The Bihar cabinet was not sworn in until May 6th, 1957, one week after the inaugural meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council. In the previous cabinet Shah Ozair Munemi held the portfolios of Jails, Relief and Rehabilitation. Later, he was also made Minister of Transport.

For Tripura: K. P. Bhargava  
Chief Commissioner

Also attending were the Adviser to the Governor of Assam for Tribal Areas, and representatives from the Union Planning Commission.

## The Central Zonal Council

For Uttar Pradesh: Sampurnanand  
Chief Minister  
Hafiz Mohammed Ibrahim  
Finance, Power and Industries  
Charan Singh  
Revenue

**For Madhya Pradesh: K. N. Katju**  
**Chief Minister**  
**Takhtmal Jain**  
**Commerce and Industries and**  
**Agriculture**  
**Shankar Lal Tiwari**  
**Public Works and Electricity**

The Chief Secretaries and Development Commissioners of the two states also attended, together with representatives from the Planning Commission, and the Central Board of Irrigation and Power.

## The Southern Zonal Council

For Andhra Pradesh: N. Sanjiva Reddy  
Chief Minister  
K. Venkata Ranga Reddy  
Home Minister (Police and  
Prohibition)  
Kala Venkata Rao  
Land Revenue, Land Reforms,  
Registration and Excise

For Kerala:

E. M. S. Nambudiripad  
Chief Minister

C. Achutha Menon  
Finance, Insurance, Commercial  
Taxes, Agricultural Income-tax,  
Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

V. R. Krishna Iyer  
Law, Legislation, Elections,  
Administration of Civil and  
Criminal Justice, Jails, Irrigation  
and Electricity

For Madras:                   K. Kamaraj  
                                  Chief Minister  
                          M. Bhaktavatsalam  
                                  Home, including Courts, Prisons and  
                                  Prohibition and Food and  
                                  Agriculture  
                          C. Subramaniam  
                                  Finance, Education, Information and  
                                  Law

By invitation:               S. Nijalingappa  
                                  Chief Minister, Mysore

The Western Zonal Council

For Bombay:               Y. B. Chavan  
                                  Chief Minister  
                          Jivraj Mehta  
                                  Finance Minister  
                          M. S. Kannamwar  
                                  Public Health

For Mysore:               S. Nijalingappa  
                                  Chief Minister  
                          M. P. Patil  
                                  Revenue  
                          H. K. Veeranna Gowda  
                                  Public Works and Electricity

G. L. Nanda, Union Planning Minister, and Mrs. Violet Alva, Deputy Home Minister, attended by special invitation. Assisting at the meeting were S. V. Ramamurthi, Adviser to the Planning Commission, and the Chief Secretaries of Bombay and Mysore.



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- Amrita Bazar Patrika (Calcutta). Town edition. Established 1868. One of India's leading newspapers. Generally supports the Congress Party. Published simultaneously from Calcutta and Allahabad. Combined circulation (ABC):\* 68,090.

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\*Circulation figures are taken from The Indian Press Yearbook, 1956. (Madras, 1956). ABC means member, Audit Bureau of Circulation.

Deccan Herald (Bangalore). Dak edition.\* Established 1948. Mysore State's most important daily in English. Pursues an independent policy. Circulation (ABC): 13,342.

Free Press Journal (Bombay). First Dak edition. Established 1930. Circulation (ABC): 82,954.

The Hindu (Madras). Dak edition. Established 1878. The most widely read English-language daily in South India, and one of the most influential organs of public opinion in India. Independent in policy and temperate in expression. Maintains its own staff of correspondents. Circulation (ABC): 67,612.

The Hitavada (Nagpur). City edition. Established 1911 by the Servants of India Society. Generally supports the Congress Party. Circulation (ABC): 6,537.

The Hindustan Times (New Delhi). Delhi edition. Established 1923. One of India's leading newspapers. Generally supports the Congress Party. A Birla paper. Circulation (ABC): 49,335.

Indian Express (Madras). Morning edition. Established 1932. Published simultaneously from Madras, Bombay and Delhi. Consistently supports the Nehru government. Combined circulation (ABC): 101,553.

National Herald (Lucknow). City edition. Established 1938. Supports Nehru; gives qualified support to the Congress Party, advocating a course further to the left. Circulation: 7,901.

The Pioneer (Lucknow). City edition. Established 1865. Pursues a conservative editorial policy. Circulation (ABC): 8,942.

The Statesman (Calcutta). Late city edition. Established 1875 by British commercial interests. Published simultaneously from Calcutta and New Delhi. One of India's leading newspapers. Gives wide coverage to foreign news. Independent and conservative policy. Combined circulation (ABC): 67,704.

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\*The term "Dak" is frequently applied to an edition circulated in areas outside the city in which a newspaper is published. Dak editions are likely to be dated one day later than the corresponding city edition.

Times of India (Bombay). Established 1838. One of India's leading newspapers. Anti-Communist and frequently critical of the Congress government. Has its own news service with correspondents throughout the country and in foreign capitals. Published simultaneously from Bombay and New Delhi. Combined circulation (ABC): 97,290.

The Tribune (Ambala). Local edition. Established 1881 at Lahore, now in West Pakistan. After partition The Tribune moved to East Punjab, in India. Generally supports the Congress Party. Circulation (ABC): 17,947.

## B. WEEKLIES

Blitz (Bombay). Established 1941. Anti-West, pro-Communist, sensational. Circulation (ABC): 27,666.

Capital (Calcutta). Established 1888. A leading financial journal. Circulation (ABC): 4,000.

Crossroads (New Delhi). Established 1949 as the official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Replaced in 1953 by New Age.

The Eastern Economist (New Delhi). Established 1943. A journal of opinion on economics and politics; conservative; a Birla publication. Circulation claimed: 4,500.

Harijan (Ahmedabad). Established by Mahatma Gandhi in 1933. Discontinued publication following issue of February 25, 1956.

Janata (Bombay). Established 1946 as an official organ of the Socialist Party of India which, in 1952, merged with the KMPP to form the Praja Socialist Party. Circulation claimed (Janata, 1956, January 15, p. 10): 2,000.

The Mahratta (Poona). Established 1881. The English companion paper to the more widely circulated Marathi paper, Kesari. Has a strongly nationalistic editorial policy. No circulation figures available.

Mysindia (Bangalore). Established 1939. Anti-Communist. Consistently critical of Nehru's foreign policy. Circulation claimed: 12,430.

New Age (New Delhi). Inaugurated in 1953 as the official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, replacing Crossroads. No circulation figures available.

Organiser (Delhi). Established 1947. Endorses Jan Sangh Party. Militantly Hindu, anti-Nehru, anti-Muslim, anti-Christian. Circulation (ABC): 7,548.

The Radical Humanist (Calcutta). Founded by M. N. Roy. Advocates decentralization of power and a cooperative (not collectivist) economy as the way to meet the challenge of Communism. No circulation figures available.

Swarajya (Madras). Established July 14, 1956, by Khasa Subba Rau. Continues the policy and the features associated with the old Swatantra. No circulation figures available.

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